

# JAPANESE IMPRESSIONS



# **JAPANESE IMPRESSIONS**

**WITH A NOTE ON CONFUCIUS**

**TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF  
PAUL-LOUIS COUCHOUD**

**BY FRANCES RUMSEY, WITH  
A PREFACE BY ANATOLE FRANCE**

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TO  
THE EXQUISITE MASTER  
ANATOLE FRANCE  
P.-L. C.



## PREFACE

### I



THE French author whom I have the honour to present to this English public—considered as it is by H. Taine to be the most serious, the most reserved and the most attentive in the world—is worthy, I am certain, to occupy the leisure of so estimable a collective sensibility. M. Paul-Louis Couchoud, former scholar of the École Normale, professor of philosophy and doctor of medicine, published in 1902, while still very young, a book which already disclosed the centre of attraction of a mind ceaselessly stirred by an ardent curiosity, but which revolves about a central point in that it is harmonious and fundamentally informed. This book is a study on Spinoza (published by Alcan) conceived in an original manner. In his belief that the doctrine of a philosopher is an historic event, the author has attached the work of the excommunicated Jew of Amsterdam to those exterior circumstances which can explain it; he acquaints us with the surroundings in which Spinoza lived and unfolds an animated and inspired series of pictures. Thus the vocation of M. Couchoud was manifest at an early hour. He has since made important studies in psychiatry, he has conducted

laboratory researches and has even isolated a new germ. But his chief desire is to place his acquisition at the service of the modern Clio and his interest is to meditate on the history of the moral ideas which constitute the common base of each human generation.

It is thus that he has been led to the study of the origin of Christianity. Having reached the splendid meridian of the road of life, he is consecrating the years of his rich maturity to the composition of a book which will present under a new aspect the obscure beginnings of a religion that has conquered a vast portion of the world. As much as it has been given to me to know of this work in process of formation inspires a vivid interest and that enthusiasm which emanates from the presentiment of a great accomplishment : *Nescio quid majus nascitur* . . . I shall not finish the phrase : it would be a lapse of taste to assume the oracular tone. But it is none the less true that attentive minds, in Europe and in America, see this exegesis, after three centuries of effort, touch on the verge of those results least awaited by the ignorant multitude. How magnificent and how worthy of praise are those men who, with infinite labour, surmounting almost insurmountable obstacles, and surrounded by the indifference or the hostility of the mass, ceaselessly seek the truths which are essentially necessary to liberty of mind and to tranquillity of heart.

But I have not characterized Dr. Couchoud until I have defined his familiar spirit, which whispers perpetually in his ear and leads him at its will.

This spirit is the same which goaded the old Herodotus to wander throughout the known world of the Greeks, to visit the barbarians and to study their customs, and which furnished the matter of his tales; it is the spirit which haunts the curious and sincere soul whose jealous care is to paint from nature—the spirit of travel; that spirit which led Marco-Polo to the Great Mogul, at the price of cruel fatigues and numberless dangers. To-day one is a Marco-Polo without difficulty. Favoured by the genius of his time, Dr. Couchoud has since the days of his early youth circled the world. The book which I am here presenting, *Japanese Impressions*, owes much to this familiar spirit in him. The title, if it be not exact as a definition, at least promises us a charming voyage, and it does not disappoint us. The volume is actually composed of five studies, three of these consecrated to Japan, where the author lived, and one to China which he visited.

How gradual, after all, has been our advance in the knowledge of the planet we inhabit, one of the smallest of its system, which is itself not one of the greatest of the heavenly systems. Even yesterday, for the European consciousness, the Far East was scarcely included in the philosophy of history. It is given no place in the *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* of Bossuet. Voltaire's genius divined China; but he did not understand it, and in the eighteenth century it was to us a still inaccessible country. Ernest Renan, whose mind was so wide and so curious, concerned himself little with it. In my youth no one revealed to me the grandeur and the beauty of the antique Oriental civilizations. China was scarcely known to us save by its porcelains,

of whose age we were ignorant, and Japan by its prints which we admired without discernment. The European generation to which M. Paul-Louis Couchoud belongs has been the first to investigate, to study and to consider at leisure an opened China and a transformed Japan; a Japan which was victor of Russia and rival of the United States, and which now enters the concert of peoples and makes itself redoubtable by its fleet, its army and its diplomacy.

M. Couchoud, from the moment he saw Japan, loved it; not only for its cleverness, and its astounding promptitude in borrowing from Europeans weapons with which to combat them, but for its fine love of beauty, its courtesy, its exquisite art of living and for a sentiment for nature of an unequalled penetration. Were it not that his curiosity is universal and that he is possessed by a need to see and comprehend everything, he would, like Lafcadio Hearn, have adopted a Japanese life and passed the remainder of his days in a joint appreciation, with this people so dedicated to the love of landscape, of the festivals of the first snow and the bursting of the cherry trees into flower.

## 3

His book begins with an article entitled "The Japanese Quality," treating of the prevalence of the love of Nature in a country where every one is a poet, a draughtsman or a musician. In Japan one paints and writes with the same brush, as M. Couchoud tells us, and poetry is not the exclusive property of the erudite. Art is universal. The woodcutter's wife crowns the little bundle which

she carries on her head with a few red leaves. It is the country of design. With a single stroke the Japanese can perpetuate the attitude of an animal. What Pisanello alone created in Italy has constantly, and during centuries, been created in Japan. Our author attributes this aptitude to depict both domestic and wild animals to that sympathy for every living creature which is natural to Asiatic peoples. The Japanese believe themselves to be of the same essence as beasts. It lends them an amiable and charming quality, that they have not broken the bond which binds man to animate nature—which is the whole of nature; they remain in a communion with universal life, with animals and with plants, and they have not taken refuge, with an arrogant ignorance, in the empty spaces of metaphysics.

## 4

After these pages, written with profound feeling and with enchantment in their style, follows a section on the Japanese Muse, consecrated in particular to the *haikai*, a poem composed in a fixed form of seventeen syllables. It is thus a fragment of extreme brevity, beside which the European sonnet appears an epic. It naturally becomes imperative that these seventeen syllables should emanate from a definite emotion. In Japan the poet speaks in a universal language, the same which a countryman uses and understands. In its compactness, we are told, the *haikai* lays a fine touch on both the ear and the heart. Basho, the Epictetus and the Marcus Aurelius of Japan, excelled in this mode of composition which bears for us an analogy to the Greek epigram. But there is more art in

Meleager than in Basho. Since he is far more familiar than we with the *haikai*, M. Couchoud savours it more intimately. He cites an extensive selection of these charming dwarf-like morsels and accentuates for us their salient quality. With his natural persuasiveness he was able during the war to inspire one of his friends, Julien Vocance, with the idea of noting the impressions of trench life in this rhythm so essentially Japanese, and M. Vocance has succeeded in expressing, in *haikai*, experiences of the finest sensibility. (Julien Vocance, *Cent Visions de Guerre*.)

## 5

The third section of this collection is "Japanese Patriotism." It is a transcript of the journal which the author kept in Tokyo in the month of February, 1904, on the outbreak of war between Japan and Russia; notes rapidly flung on paper, of a vivid interest to all who lived in France and in England the hours of August and September, 1914, and of the widest significance for those who consider in a philosophic spirit the passage of human events. These last will, perhaps, be struck by the fact that, taken as a whole and at the same degree of civilization, the differences between men are insignificant and that in like conditions they act more or less in like fashion. We see a people of a yellow race preparing to fight a powerful opponent. To watch them and to hear them inspires a Frenchman, and, indeed, an Englishman if his self-esteem does not weaken his judgment, with a sense of their likeness to himself. In the face of the enemy they show the same patriotism, the same confidence and the same



enthusiasm. Selecting in advance the formula which the Allies were afterwards to adopt, Nippon declared that it was fighting in defence of civilization. All factions merged into one; only the Socialists gave vent to some protestations which were contemptuously disregarded. The merchants proved to be extraordinarily bellicose and recognized that the war had business advantages for them; the government suspended parliamentary guaranties and established a censorship of books and newspapers; the *bonzes* collected to present the soldiers with protective charms precisely as, ten years later, the French priests distributed in the trenches the medals of the Immaculate Conception. War bonds were issued and the heavy subscriptions to them, from patriotic motives, made a handsome aggregate; private individuals poured their gold into the coffers of the state; and those booths at the fairs where the loafers of Tokyo came to shoot Russians for a penny recall to one, vividly enough, the flaring stage of the Empire Music Hall where Londoners applauded a clown buffeting with his fists an effigy of President Kruger.

If one wishes to cite particularities of difference, one could perhaps note that the Japanese gave his riches to the state with a liberality unknown to Europeans. In the diverse agitations of the time there was exemplified that Asiatic disdain of death which is without a parallel under our skies. One is no less struck by the chivalrous spirit inherited from the old Samurai, notably manifest when the Russian ambassador quitted Tokyo overwhelmed with honours and with gifts, and which frequently expressed itself in courtesies of language in regard to the enemy. But it must be considered that the

Japanese had not had to bear the strain of long wars with Russia, with their consequent injuries; that since the outbreak of these hostilities the constant victory of their arms made generosity facile; and that in any case their tone essentially changed when they learned that the Russians were sinking merchant ships and indulging in acts of piracy. From that moment they were treated as barbarians, Goths and Vandals.

It is unprofitable to persist too closely in these parallels between peoples who never act in circumstances which are completely identical. None the less war lends itself more than peace to such comparisons, since it discovers the primitive impulses of men and discloses masses united in a common action. Since we are led, under the guidance of an historian-philosopher, to speculate on these relations of humanity in time and space, we must necessarily wonder whether mortals, in their subjection to necessity, have not resemblances in the essential, in all epochs and throughout the world, and despite the divergences produced by race, by climate and by all special conditions of life. In ancient times likeness between peoples seems to have been the principal point of consideration. It was the effort of the minds of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to determine that man resembled man, under exterior divergences. The romanticists, with Walter Scott at their head, and looking to the wider distances, suddenly felt dissimilarities to be more fine than identities. Augustin Thierry, to cite that evocator of the past who, in an epoch of inexactness, kept the measure of his thought equable and his tone just, is visibly devoted to distinctive particularities and forces local colour

in his pictures. In one chapter of his studies he takes exception to his predecessor, the old Anquetil, who fastens upon the French, from Clovis to Louis XIV, uniform traits. But shortly thereafter Sainte-Beuve, that profound student of souls, was to estimate that the more one studies history the more one discovers that men and things, under variations of form and of costume, have always closely resembled each other. (For a more thorough dissection of this compare the histories of Mézeray and Rollin with those of the two Thierry and Michelet: Guizot remains of the old school: the reader will be still more struck, if he places the *Télémaque* of Fénelon and the *Séthos* of the Abbé Terrasson side by side with the *Martyrs* of Chateaubriand and the *Salammbô* of Flaubert.) The fundamental and rapid progress of the historical sciences hastened the romantic defeat. But however we recognize the essential identities it is none the less true, as the common language expresses it, that a stranger remains strange. M. Couchoud is particularly gifted to write history in accordance with the exigency of modern thought; as a philosopher and an artist he expresses with an equal felicity the general and the particular.

## 6

The fourth and final chapter of the book transports us from Japan to China, that immense and venerable land where, under the Sung, as M. Couchoud recounts, were invented refinements of sensibility unknown to the rest of the world. This is the relation of a visit, or I should rather say of a pilgrimage, to the tomb of Confucius at K'iu-

feou. Our author inspires in us his own love for this old sage who spoke so little of a celestial providence, who made no pronouncement upon what was beyond the knowledge of man, who confined his teaching to the conduct of life and of public affairs and who, in advance of the stoics, professed charity to human kind. M. Couchoud foresees and hails a day when the best thought of the world, as a single entity, will unite in a common veneration of Confucius and of Socrates; and this concludes a volume which, composed as it is of detached articles, forms in its spirit and its doctrine a homogeneous whole.

## 7

The charm of M. Couchoud lies in that rare power to evoke ancient or distant facts which is the faculty of a Renan and a Ferrero, and which touches history with the interest of a living spectacle. He is gifted with that rich imagination, as necessary to the historian as to the poet, and without which nothing is inspired or illuminated. He has invention in the strict sense of the word, the art of divining, of disclosing what is hidden. Yet this penetrating spirit, which pierces to the depths of things, seems at times to brush over their surface, so light a hand does he lay on them. His thought naturally inclines to benevolence, not that he constrains himself to an excessive indulgence to individuals, whom he rather seeks to appreciate with equity. His goodwill is larger than this, and approaches that of Renan; it is to men at large, and to the obscure multitude, that it lends itself. His kindness radiates like a living light and dissipates the shadows of an extinct faith. He loves men even with their faults and

follies, and seems at times to excuse himself for not participating in their weaknesses.

There obviously results in his case what results with most minds who exercise to excess the faculty of comprehension. Since they recognize the reason of what exists, they are ready to accommodate themselves to it. They do not easily combat even what they least approve; they rather enter into that popular thought most opposed to their own and register its prejudices. Polemics horrify them; they wisely fear the loss of time in mere dispute. If, however, the old Scandinavians were right to believe in the virtue of runes, and if a sacred word traced on a stone had the power to change the world, who better than such men could write that word? But I am forgetting the fact that they are ceaselessly writing it, unknown to themselves, and that it is their thought which is transforming societies.

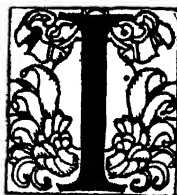
M. Couchoud writes without affectation, with no apparent effort, with a natural beauty and a winning grace; his concrete style illumines, colours and vivifies objects; like that Venus whom the gravest of the Latin poets invokes, he brings flowers to blossom, scatters a radiance and penetrates one's feeling with a fine flame. Great praise is also due to Madame Frances Rumsey for having transformed into English all that could be conserved of so rich a language.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

*January, 1920.*



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE



It may seem appropriate to note the service which, beyond its original theme, M. Couchoud's delicate little volume renders to such thought as is dedicated to the play of the selective sense. We have in it not only a charming glimpse of Japan but, from the point of view of the English reader, a visible illustration of the action of the fine French thought dealing with a subject completely alien. It has become a tradition with us that the French mind does not readily travel, in the sense that travel is a projection and displacement of the imagination; even in dealing with history and with art, far removed from the immediacy of our day, it is our impression that the French writer remains of his time and of his particular place; and that for long he looked upon Asia as he saw it in the lacquer of Louis XV furniture and in the *chinoiserie* of the snuff-boxes at Versailles. We have before us the interesting instance of a mind which has travelled in a perfectly defined degree and with a clarity of purpose possible only to this race—with the purpose of recognizing and apprehending beauty. M. Couchoud is completely logical. He makes no attempt to draw artificial conclusions from either historic or artistic data, except as they minister to his central idea. He does not deduce morals from his delightful poetic

themes. He applies himself to the facts he sees, rather than he derives from them a forced conclusion. His comments are notations, and not an attempt at an impossible participation. This integrity in the French judgment strikes long echoes as it strikes against the integrity of the Japanese character and discovers to us much that, in our looser way, we have never formed into definition. The French penetration makes evident to us such points as that, though the Japonais have the instinct to learn the art and arts of life, it yet so slightly modifies their actual living; that in spite of their cult for Nature, they learn so little from her; it defines the line between the progressive and the imitative, and it understands that there is no mere formality in the Japanese formalism but that it is a current ritual of thought and action. Those very divergences between France and Japan, of which M. Couchoud reminds us, have their surprising analogies and correspondences. Some taste of France comes to us when we realize that Japanese art, which seems to have all the saliency of the personal, is produced by the mind of the race rather than by the individual mind. The subordination of the individual himself to form touches the fabric of the French social consciousness; just as the Japanese calligraphic sense may strike our vision as French thought made visible, in its fine tracery and sharp relativities.

There was no more possibility of translating M. Couchoud's text literally than of explaining his impact with the Japanese civilization entirely by either its affirmations or contradictions. It has been necessary to feel for the action of his mentality, a mentality at once ascetic, grave and rich. His



idea has been literally preserved wherever possible ; since his letter is his spirit, it is hoped that this has been scrupulously accomplished. His translations of the *haikai* have been carried as far as possible word for word into the rougher medium of English ; and it is a sign of the beauty of his process that, even in an Occidental approximation, so much of their fineness, their sensitiveness and their compactness remains. What is above all a tribute to M. Couchoud, and to all of France in him, is that a record of impressions of travel, which was necessarily fugitive, should yet be so vivid and so distinguished.



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# INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER



## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER



THE four fragments which form this notation were written in Japan and in China. In them will be found the faults, and possibly the verity, of the immediacy of a first impression. They were the author's entry into Asia; and they are destined for those who have not yet crossed that enchanted threshold.

"The Japanese Quality" is an attempt such as one makes to concentrate, for one's more understanding friends, the salient elements of a year of an alien existence. If I had to reconstitute a longer experience, I should change some of my details and I should add much, but I should leave throughout the same colour. There is in Japan an essential charm which the man of taste will always seek there, and which he cannot find elsewhere. One captures it in the sight of the pinnacle of a little temple amongst the pines, in the ceremonies of the acceptance of a cup of tea, or in the smile with which two Japanese greet each other. Inherent in this charm is a conception of life and of art whose perfection was reached at Kyoto, in the fifteenth century, under the principality of the Ashikaga. Kyoto has the immanent grandeur of Athens and of Florence; like them it resumes an exquisite moment in human

history. The miracle of beauty which united in Athens the procession of the Panathenea, the sculpture of Phidias and the tragedy of Sophocles brought into co-existent being, at Kyoto, the gardens of the moon, the painting of Sesshu, the *Nô* dances and the rites of communion with great art. There is in the East a secret taste of life, a penetration of nature, a fine effusion of pity, an enjoyment accentuated by brevity and mystery, and a flash of the spirit, which those who have once tasted know cannot exist in the Occident. The art and the moral life of Mediterraneans is too dependent on their public. Eloquence, dialectic and humanism are the marrow of their bones. It is to the senses of that soul which has the passion of solitude that Japan opens a special world of beauty, opposed to, but as fine in its values, as that which exists in the Parthenon. Japan is as eternal as Greece; like Greece it is a universal possession. As long as men exist who have the sensitiveness to respond to the incomparable art of the Sung and Ashikaga, and who comprehend the Hagoromo and Yamamba dances, the spirit of antique Japan will survive in its irreducible and incomparable essence.

The exquisite fourteenth-century Japan carries one's thoughts back to the twelfth century in China, as Florence turns one's thoughts to Athens. It was China where, under the Sung emperors and beside the flowery lakes of Hanchou, there was invented a refinement of sensibility unequalled in human history. The thread runs still farther back, to that first creator of idealism, India, whose missionaries brought to the industrious Chinese and the warlike Japanese that Buddhist principle which,



rough but full of fire, was to spread a unique spark of animation. Asia is one. The same great spiritual torrents and the same imperceptible tremors of sensitiveness have passed through it from end to end. This is the first realization necessary for one who knocks at any one of its doors. But all these waves of feeling broke about Japan, and became part of her own vibration. The Indian ardour and the Indian delicacy, the Chinese power of reason and the Japanese force of will, are all necessary, in their highest intensity, to the production of a Japanese work of art.

“The Lyric Epigrams of Japan” are in reality, in the compression of their seventeen syllables, poems in miniature or a prolonged exclamation, which lose in translation both their incisiveness and the speed which makes their life. These epigrams are the more modern form of the Japanese lyric art; the other forms are the classic poems of thirty-one syllables and the fragmentary chants of the *Nô* dances. These latter are no less essentially Japanese; but the sentiment for nature which they exhale is of Chinese origin and they are saturated with an Indian ecstasy.

The interest of the epigrams is that they furnish us with the perfect example of that discontinuous poetry towards which all Japanese poets, and possibly all Asiatic poets, tend. Stéphane Mallarmé has denounced the facile eloquence which has submerged our own lyrics. He wished that poetic expression should deal only with those things which could in no way be treated in prose. Poetry had been continuously betrayed, as he put it with a smile, “since the great Homeric deviation.” If

he were reminded of what existed before Homer, he qualified it by the term orphism. The Vedic hymns, the early Chinese poems and the Japanese uta and haikai touch Mallarmé's own orphism. In comparison with them all our own poetic styles are oratorical. Mallarmé had an intuition of this development when he wrote :

Imiter le Chinois au cœur limpide et fin  
 De qui l'extase pure est de peindre la fin,  
 Sur ses tasses de neige à la lune ravie,  
 D'une bizarre fleur qui parfume sa vie  
 Transparente, la fleur qu'il a sentie enfant,  
 Au filigrane bleu de l'âme se greffant.

It is above all the discursive and the explanatory which are extirpated from the Japanese poem. Its fantastic flower is unique, as it detaches itself from the snow. A bouquet is always forbidden. The essence of the creation is sensation, lyrically expressed, caught at the instant when it bubbles from the spring, and before a movement of either thought or passion has placed and utilized it. Logical relation of experience is left to prose; the placing of ideas in affective sequence, by means of rhythm, redundancy and cadences, is left to eloquence. The Japanese poetry has its consummation in pure sensation, which it rigorously refuses to sully with qualification or explanation. It is therefore essential that the subject should contain to perfection this initial purity; and in this incomparable use of the selective sense the poet's genius begins and ends.

Words must always remain an obstacle. The composition of them in sequence creates a chain and introduces an elemental order which is instantly artificial. It is for this reason that Japanese poetry

has freed itself of all forms but that of seventeen syllables; and a discussion of this special instance of composition will perhaps interest those who have meditated on the essence of poetry.

“Japanese Patriotism” is a digest of notes kept, in Japan, during the first two months of the Russo-Japanese war. They are a cinematographic view of Japan, at a moment when her destiny hung in the grave uncertainties of oscillation. As a Frenchman, my sympathies were more naturally in the Russian camp; but, little by little, Japan conquered personal instances of dissimilarity, as she afterwards conquered her enemies.

Neither the war of 1894 nor that of 1914 shook the country to its foundations or discovered its essence like that of 1904. It was an exceptional hour for observation. A great war puts a people to those supreme tests to which a vital sickness puts the individual. Under its disintegration the profoundest forces of resistance come into play. We Occidentals are now emerging from such a condition, and the reader may, perhaps, be curious to see how an Asiatic people has issued from a similar experience. I have ventured to present these notes as an instantaneous sketch, and without retouching them. The penetrative mind will judge for itself if this Japanese devotion to country can become a part of the soul, and mingle with the delicate poetry and the calm wisdom of Asia.

The Russo-Japanese war will remain a vital date in the history of peoples. When it ended, in the victory of the Rising Sun, the contact of Japan with the Occident was established on terms of equality. By means of her victory Japan, as the

champion of Asiatic civilization, created for herself a place amongst the civilized nations of Europe, a place which she has since occupied, with the fullest rights, in the late European war. This particular participation, whose political results are in process of formation under our eyes, is rich with immense consequences for general civilization. Across the fine lacquer bridge built by the Japanese soldier between Asia and Europe, all the stored treasures of humanity may be equally exchanged.

“Confucius” is the relation of a visit which the author made to the philosopher’s native land, in company with a young and learned member of the École française d’Extrême-Orient, M. Aurousseau. M. Chavannes, so regretted by his many friends, was kind enough to read this account.

One owes to the Sage of China an impression of complete continuity; it is through him that one discovers that beneath the robe of Chinese embroideries there is the same reunion of intellectual faculties which lies beneath the himation of Aristotle, beneath the toga of Cicero and beneath the *pour-point* of Descartes. The power of direct reasoning appears as one of the most universal of possessions, identical in its essence across centuries and distances. From the impenetrability of China and through the mists of time, Confucius speaks to us a word which we instantly comprehend; and, in a flash, he has become our contemporary and our compatriot.

The dissemination of his doctrine of reason, however, remains an incomprehensible prodigy. It brings us to a vast and disturbing question: what respective use of reason has been made by the peoples of Europe and the peoples of Asia? In Europe it

is apparent that reason has essentially been applied in the realm of knowledge, and that it has both invented and perfected the sciences. In Asia it has been applied in the relation of man to man and to the perfection of justice and happiness. It is this point which resumes the profound fascination of Asia. Life there is simpler and softer than with us because it is more reasoned. "You, Greeks, are the youth of the world," said the Egyptian priest to Herodotus. "You are young," is the phrase of the Asiatic sages to our restless scientists, who have weighed the stars but who have found no formula to bring men closer to justice or happiness. The Revelations are the empiric solution with which we must still content ourselves. We shall learn from Asia as much as she will learn from us ; with us the individual is more remarkable, but her busy hive of existence is better constructed.

To confront these two halves of humanity will be the great work of this century. We are approaching an epoch which transcends our imaginations. At no given period of the past has the human consciousness apprehended the death and the birth of such vital factors. For the first time, from one end of the earth to the other, man is aware of man ; for the first time there is indicated some basis of a common life for humanity. Between the peoples who invented the ideograms of Asia and those who adopted the vocal roots of Europe, there was formerly a terrifying distance ; there is to-day a nearness no less terrifying. The inventions of the mechanical world—the locomotive, the steamship, the automobile, the telegraph, the daily paper and the cinematograph—have automatically accomplished this. To-day, in any given twenty-four

hours, the same news is known, at least virtually, throughout the world. The mechanical processes have so united humanity that they are forced to an identical process of progression.

What will arise from this imposed conciliation? Before long the terrestrial surface will appear as a single vast State, in the primary conditions of disorganization and chaos. It is even probable that the Richelieu or the Cavour, who will first indicate the lines of order into which this general aggregate is to fall, is already born; and if this must come to pass with violence, it will none the less come to pass.

The other perspective which calls us is that of the individual. The man of to-day is born with a fabulous heritage from distant and innumerable sources. He cannot deny his inheritance, and it is his trust to administer and utilize it. Until now our thoughts on this matter have been half complete; we have not seen our Europe in the proportion which it bears to the rest of human kind. Scarcely forty years ago Renan could write: "Pour un esprit philosophique il n'y a vraiment dans le passé de l'humanité que trois histoires de premier intérêt: l'histoire grecque, l'histoire d'Israël, l'histoire romaine." He lived in the same intellectual world known to the Ancients. To-day this would be impossible. The barrier has fallen. We see that humanity has developed on two wide levels, and that it has flashed into the night of history two great searchlights.

The investigations of the future historian promise an extraordinary fruition. Each of our arts will be culminated by one of the arts of our newly discovered brothers in resemblance or dissemblance.

The product of our emotion, our minds and our hands will serve as matter for general comparison, and, one by one, strange correspondences will be discovered. There is not a problem, whether profound or subtle, posed and resolved on one side of the planet, which has not repeated itself, in essence, on the other side. Many of our absolute terms are about to become relative ; and we shall use the word universal with a juster sense of its content.

In this stupendous exchange, Japan will be a pioneer. The last and most vigorous offspring of Asia, that mother of peoples, she has constituted herself the guardian, the advocate and the interpreter of her ancient ancestress. Geographically she is placed at the single point of intersection between Asia and Europe. It was essentially in Japan that such men of the newer culture could appear as Lafcadio Hearn, Hall Chamberlain, Okakura Kakuzo ; men who have in their thought united Asiatic to Occidental culture and in whom there has developed the consciousness of a unique humanity. If Europe is to continue an upward march, it will be more and more vitally European by this extension of consciousness, and we shall even see Buddhistic ecstasy and Confucian wisdom distilled into the Christian liturgy. But if Europe is to founder in new cataclysms, it will save from the wreck only what is in its present limited capacity to save ; and the best of our thoughts would survive as they are now repeated, in fine ideograms, on silken scrolls. From the sacred hills of Kyoto, even more than from those of Rome, the avenues of a new world reach to the infinite ; and from their summits one divines, as from the prow of a ship, the new horizon.





# THE JAPANESE QUALITY



## THE JAPANESE QUALITY

### I



THE most remarkable event of the years which immediately preceded the European War was the entrance of Japan into the rank of the great powers. We give this term, not to those nations which are the most highly civilized but to those which, in event of war, are most to be feared. Japan has proved to China, to Russia and to Germany that she is possessed of a redoubtable strength; and, now that we recognize her power, we consent to speak of her otherwise than in the phrases of Loti's amused and slightly disdainful curiosity. M. Motono, former Minister of Japan in Paris, once put it with a penetration in which there was an element of sadness: "As long as we consecrated ourselves to the work of an intensive civilization, as long as we produced only men of letters, men of knowledge and artists, you treated us as barbarians. Now that we have learned to kill, you call us civilized." It will be essential to keep in mind the lesson inherent in this observation; to put on one side the formidable spectacle of Japan's growth in armaments, and to penetrate to the characteristic traits of that ancient and original civilization to which she lays claim,

and which she is prepared to defend, with European arms, against Europe itself.

In the first instance we must relegate to its place what is called, with an obvious grossness, the Europeanization of Japan. It is unnecessary to recall a fact of which we are fundamentally aware, though we at times disregard it—that Japan did not await the arrival of Europeans in order to become civilized. In the seventh century of our era, when the Merovingian kings were dragged by oxen through the forests of Gaul, the flowering of the arts in Japan was equal to that in the Italy of the Renaissance and the refinements of living were those of France under Louis XV. Since this epoch there have never existed in Japan the same stagnation and inertia which overcame China. Until about the year 1830, no matter at what given date one compares Japan with France, the former is almost always relatively in advance of the latter. It is the most erroneous of impressions that Japan has traversed in thirty years the ground which it has taken Europe ten centuries to cover. What she has learned from Europe, since 1834, are the means of defence against the fate of Java, the Philippines and Indo-China. Outside of this general conformity to the methods of modern armaments, Japan owes Europe two main systems of progression: in the first place, railways, which, France must remember, date not from the time of Charlemagne but from that of Louis-Philippe; and, in the second place, the parliamentary system, which began to work on a normal basis in the various Western States only about the same time, and which is to-day scarcely assured throughout Europe. As to the developments of electricity, these date, practically in their

entirety, from 1870, and the Japanese followed them and benefited by them at exactly the same time as the French.

On the arrival of the European influences, therefore, Japan was less like a barbarian than like a man so fundamentally cultured that he is ready to absorb whatever of value comes to him from another world. It is sometimes said that Japan has assimilated the results of science, but neither the methods nor the spirit which has produced them. This is essentially erroneous. In physics, in chemistry, in medicine and in philology Japanese scholars are the equals of their Occidental brothers. It was a Japanese physician who isolated the plague bacillus, and it has been Japanese physicists, with their fortunate opportunities of studying a volcanic soil, who have developed to so great an extent the science of seismography.

In our effort to give a further extension to the antiquity of our civilization, we are accustomed to prolong it by attaching it to the civilizations of Rome and of Greece. In such a postulation it is but just to add to the Japanese civilization the civilizations of ancient China and ancient India. Confucius and Buddha are far anterior to Socrates. Japan is to-day both the inheritor and the knight-errant of all Asiatic civilization. It was India which created that admirable Buddhism which has proved a practically inexhaustible source of art, of morality, and of the spirit of goodness. But Buddhism has long since disappeared from India, and to-day it is vital and fecund only in Japan. Until the sixteenth century, China was a constant creator of new forms of art and of thought. Sculpture, painting, poetry and philosophy emanated from China and Japan,

and each manifestation of Japanese progression in these fields corresponds to a new wave of the Chinese influence. But after the invasion of the Manchus China sank into torpor, and to-day the ancient monuments of her art are largely in Japanese museums.

In addition to the defence of her national inheritance, Japan is, therefore, also the guardian of the Indian and Chinese traditions. From the point of view of Mediterranean culture, it is Japan which synthesizes the civilization of the other half of humanity. Seen from this angle, her victory in the conflict with Russia was an indubitable necessity; for in the ruins of Japan all the concentrated survival of ancient Asia would have perished, and a whole section of humanity must have fallen to dust.

Any brief attempt to define some traits of the Japanese mentality must necessarily be superficial and incomplete. The present study is restricted to deal with three points: the Japanese love of nature, the place which they assign to art, and their moral education.

## 2

No people have so keen an emotion in the face of nature as the Japanese. In spite of a fairly severe winter climate, it is with reluctance that they close their houses against what is for them a perpetually renewed spectacle of beauty. Throughout all the change of seasons, the Japanese removes the finely constructed partitions of wood and paper which separate him from the sky, from the flight of birds, and from the profound calm of his garden which symbolizes to him the essential Japan. In every room he places the tiny tree which resumes in itself

the spirit of forests. His cities are parks, and his temples are alive with flowers and with animals.

The national fête-days are the festivals of nature. Take as an example the day of the fall of the first snow ; the banks and the shops close, and one has the impression that the entire population, mounted on their high clogs, have climbed to the hills to admire the white miracle of the winter. In February, when the plum-trees break into blossom beneath the snow, the people crowd around them in a fever of admiration which has the elements of a personal piety. The old trees, which are weary with bearing, are given the support of wooden crutches ; and there is a general participation in an act of thanks for the vision of flowers and the scent of perfume during a still inclement season. There exists towards nature a ritual in the face of which other duties are suspended. In February, 1904, the plum-trees flowered a few days after the declaration of war, and the event was not less marked than in other years.

In April, there is a solemn celebration of the flowering of the cherry-trees, the most fragile of all blossoms. In the chances of wind or of rain, their life endures but three days, and for this reason the delicate mist of flowers inspires the most ardent enthusiasm. Along the length of the river at Tokyo, which is bordered with cherry-trees, boats pass and repass in a wake of petals. There are people who take the two days journey to Yoshino, to view a mountain covered with the flowers ; and others travel farther still, into the scarcely accessible forest, to catch a glimpse of the marvellous shining of a solitary cherry-tree amongst the pines. The peach-trees bloom a little later. These trees, like the cherry and the plum trees, are not trained to bear

fruit. The Japanese have no use for the grafting which is an attempt to domesticate, and they love the flowers for their wildness. In summer they have the same devotion for the elegant wistaria and the frail peony; and with the coming of autumn the thousand coloured chrysanthemums are greeted in every garden, and high on the mountains the devotees of nature watch the purpling of the maples.

Autumn is the season of the most ardent of celebrations, that of the moon. The hours of sleep are changed to day-time, so that people can be free to follow at night the vibrant variations of moonlight. A Japanese journalist who recently arrived in Paris made, as his first comment, the observation that, beautiful as the city was, the houses were too high to permit one to see the moon; and on the nights of full moon, he could only betake himself to the *quais*, astonished to be alone with so much splendour.

It is not such a sentiment for nature but rather its extension to an entire people which is extraordinary. The enthusiasm penetrates to country-people, to coolies, and to the roughest labourers. A coolie was one day dragging my rickshaw through a snowstorm. The road was rough and the man was plainly exhausted; yet he turned back to me, not to complain, but to draw my attention to the veil of snow crowning a tree. This is the oldest and profoundest trait of the race. While in French literature, until the time of Jean-Jacques, any recorded impression of nature is exceptional Japanese poetry, ever since its farthest origin, has bloomed into landscapes. The almost prehistoric inhabitants noted the most exquisite examples of these impressions in short poems which were collected in the sixth century of our era.



There are some charming miniature poems of the twelfth and fifteenth centuries which treat of this passion, and which are remarkable for their extreme brevity. They consist of five short verses—with a cesura after the third—and in Japanese they mount to only thirty-one syllables. There exist even shorter poems, of three verses. One is constantly reminded of the fact that the Japanese genius shows in refinement and concision.

Nocturne :

Midnight.  
On the summit of Fuji  
The moon has paused . . .  
Only the mountain's smoke  
Can soil the sky.

Moonrise :

With a beating of wings  
The wild geese tear apart  
The little cloud . . .  
As they utter their cry,  
The moon !

The spring breeze :

The sudden wind  
Has flung  
The tree flowers to the grass . . .  
I thought that I saw leap  
A waterfall.

An old priest :

In spring  
I recommence my love  
Of this illusory world . . .  
In what future star  
Shall I find such flowers ?

The Willow :

At the breeze's breath  
The willow's hair  
Trembles and sways . . .  
Always towards that same land  
Where dies the spring.

The Japanese poet constantly compares the snow to the drifting petals of the cherry; he links it to his Buddhistic meditations more than once, as in the following :

When in winter days  
From the sinister skies,  
The white blossoms flutter and fall,  
My heart knows that past the clouds  
A spring surely shines.

The following is, amongst thousands, a final example of these brief poems :

Night and solitude,  
The noise of the women who wash in the stream  
Becomes fitful . . .  
As they toss the white linen  
They must be watching the moon !

The poet does not arrogate to himself alone the privileges of the apprehension of beauty. On the same plane with him and with the profoundest theologian is recognized the right of the poorest women to celebrate the splendours of this world. That sense of nature which with the Occidental is a sentiment essentially dedicated to calm moments of rare manifestation is to the Japanese a perpetual devotion before which all else keeps silence.

## 3

That same passion of the intelligence which relates the Japanese to nature exists also in his sentiment for art. With the French, the artists form an aristocracy—or, if the term may be risked, a class. They are fundamentally distinct from the

*bourgeois*. This division has its derivation in the rigid requirements of technique. No people know better than the French that, in Occidental development, to become a painter, a musician or a poet is not a matter of improvisation. In Japan a man partakes naturally of the elements of the poet, the musician and the painter, and without reflective thought. He paints and writes with the same pencil, and sees no distinction between the two modes of expression. His music is without orchestras, and still exists in the freedom of popular invention; and his poetry, in its intrinsic simplicity and brevity, is essentially denuded of artifice. The countryman who, after the harvest, sets out on a pilgrimage across Japan, slings at his sash a little note-book for the reception of his impressions, whether in the form of a brief sketch or of three little verses. The art of art is diffused throughout the people; it has saturated their country and impregnates their life with vitality.

The claim has been made that the Japanese art has not penetrated to the distances spanned by the European; and it is questionable whether it has expressed and exemplified the profundities of the human soul. But it is undeniable that it has better mastered the fulfilment of a social necessity, and that it diffuses more freely and more widely a general sense of joy and of beauty.

The fundamental principle on which Japanese taste is based would seem to be a constant application of refinement and a conservation of simplicity. The Japanese have as instinctive a repugnance to multiplication as to coarseness. The arrangement of their houses is the finest tribute to this quality. No single article of furniture is permanently placed.

The same bare room becomes a dining-room when the servant brings in a tiny lacquer table, and a bedroom when she unrolls the silken mattresses. Nothing has the rigidity of the stationary. A single place is always consecrated to contain a work of art, or any object of beauty; for the delicate statuette is often replaced by a flowering branch, or even by a single shining pebble. These changes are made according to the varying beauties of the season, the fluctuating light of the different hours, to correspond with the imaginative mood of the host or the taste of the guest whom he hopes to receive. But the consecrated object radiates its influence throughout the house. The poorest cottage possesses one beautiful thing, and the richest would never put on exhibition more than one at a time.

The selective sense of the Japanese has divined the charm of the temporary as well as the charm of the unique. It is distasteful to their sensitiveness for the inanimate to permit a work of beauty to fail of its audience and to become an object of indifference, before which one passes without either respect or emotion. Even in the museums, which have been established on the Western plan, the paintings are rolled in their cases, every five days, and the eye is refreshed by others.

The most definite social expression of this cult of art is what is called the "ceremony of tea," which is in reality an æsthetic ritual whose rites have been prescribed since the fifteenth century. Five friends, following the canonical number, meet in the morning, in the depths of an odorous garden, in a pavilion so small that it consists of only three braidings of straw, and made of thatch and of the simplest woods. An antique painting of authoritative beauty is

suspended on one wall; but the company does not turn to it until the conversation has fallen into established form, and deals in the grave and the delicate. Then, with a preliminary examination of the case which has contained it and the mounting which supports it, each guest approaches the work of art; and the phrases of their appreciation form the starting-point for a discussion of the arts which stretches into the hours. The simple repast is prepared by the guests themselves, in porcelains which are always old and exquisite, and when night surprises them the five pilgrims on the road to a finer apprehension feel that they have made a stage of their journey. Those who practise this ceremony of tea—the chajin—form an aristocracy of taste which has interpreted the acceptances and refusals of artistic Japan. Popular esteem ranks a famous chajin with a revered statesman or a great general. But every Japanese is essentially and eternally a chajin, and prides himself on his appreciation of the lines of a drawing or the curve of a vase.

All the little ornaments which emanate from Japan and which the West puts to such absurd uses—the lacquer, the ivory boxes, the sabre guards—are in customary use in their country of origin. The tiny vase which lifts its flowery contours in a European Museum often comes from the kitchen of a peasant. Since the diffusion of culture in ancient Greece there has not been so rich and disseminated a creation in the domestic arts.

The influence of the Japanese production has been felt throughout the world. In the seventeenth century their lacquer brought new life to the form and design of French furniture. Those faïences of Kyoto which a Dutch ship carried to the West gave

the wings of inspiration to this art at Delft and, later, to the same at Copenhagen. Amongst painters, from Whistler to Degas, and amongst print makers, from Rivière to Toulouse-Lautrec, those who have saturated themselves in the Japanese sense of line are easily marked. If one speaks of the influence of Europe in the military development of Japan, it is an equal justice to recognize the Japanese influence in the development of European culture. But the too facile success of the too superficial Japanese production has weakened our mature judgment of their basic art. We give its familiar and more ephemeral examples too important a place, in the fashion of that historian of Greek art who was so absorbed in talking of the Tanagra that he forgot the Parthenon. We are only academically aware that Japan has formed, produced and perpetuated a great school of sculpture and a great school of painting and that, almost without exception, the perfected examples of both arts are still in Japan.

The school of sculpture of Nara and the school of the Kano landscapes have taken categoric rank with the schools of Florentine sculpture and of Dutch landscapes; but in the future there will be a more general consciousness that they are part of the artistic patrimony of all races. In spite of predictions to the contrary, no decadence in Japanese art can be signalized. It seems to enclose the germ of an eternal rebirth, due to the perpetuity of an aristocracy of taste and to the extension of this taste to the public at large. A police officer, whose salary was perhaps twelve hundred yen a year, has been known to pay a hundred yen for a cup which passed his criticism and pleased his fancy. As long as such dissemination of good judgment exists amongst a

people, there will arise artists worthy to satisfy the demands made of them.

## 4

The link between moral and religious life is particularly strong in Japan, and the form of one is infused with the vitality of the other. Japan, even more strikingly than Italy, is the country of astonishing confirmations and particularly in matters of belief.

The curious anomaly created by the survival of Shintoism has produced a situation which would be paralleled only if ancient Celtic forms of faith had kept pace with Christianity and if to-day, in addition to the priest of the popular theocracy, there was included a Druid in his white robes, surrounded with that same mystical potency which hangs about the traditional cutting of the mistletoe at New Year, with a golden sickle; above all if, conjointly with these two hierarchies and acceptable to them both, there existed a rationalistic philosophy. Shintoism stands in the position which would in that case be occupied by the Druidic faith, the equivalent of Buddhism would be Christianity, and the rationalistic thought would be Confucian philosophy.

Shintoism has as its basic postulation the tenet that Japan is the chosen country of the gods, and that the Japanese, as descendants of the goddess Amaterasu, are by this privilege immune from the need of any moral code other than their own. There exists, therefore, very little sense of that personal responsibility which springs from the doctrines of a more intensive morality. The consequent belief is that the Japanese need only give free rein to their

innate impulses, and let speak in themselves the generousities of nature, of honour and of patriotism which are the hereditary instincts of so noble a race. A Japanese believing himself a descendant of the gods, and with credence in the possibility that, at his death, he himself may become a half-deity, has little use for the restrictive fears of the usual man; the pride of his birth inspires all his actions and is sufficient in all circumstances.

The Emperor is the nearest link with this divine inheritance. This cult for the Emperor is more fundamental than any attachment of the subject to the sovereign; indeed, for many centuries the Emperor completely lacked political authority. It may be called the cult of Japan personified. When the bulletin of a victory states that the armies have triumphed, because of the inherent virtue of the sovereign, the allusion is not alone to the reigning Emperor, but to the perpetual and perpetuated Emperor; that is, to this eternally personified expression of the genius of the nation.

One is struck by the fact that although there is scarcely any conscious idea of sin in the Japanese mentality, and no law exists to deal with polygamy, adultery or divorce, the habits of the people are essentially moral and the family life is constituted on a basis of solidity. The supposition that Japan is dissolute is the falsest of fictions. The superficial observers who leap to this conclusion have been taken unaware by the atmosphere of joy and of sensitiveness to beauty which reigns throughout the country. The elaborate courtesy of the men and the fine smile of the women have surprised them into inaccuracies of judgment, and they have believed themselves to be in conditions related to those of Tahiti. French



travellers have been especially apt to commit this particular error, since with them all literature of travel carries a tradition of libertinism. The French language has a regrettable tendency to give to alien terms, as well as to alien impressions, the implication of a gallant meaning. For example, the ordinary Turkish words *seraglio* and *harem*, the first signifying a palace and the second corresponding to the English word *home*, have assumed in French a special sense. In the same way the Japanese terms *mousmé* and *geisha* have come to represent, in French, women constituted and trained for the relation of the sexes, whose chastity is not on the defensive. The *mousmé* is quite simply the daughter of the household, the eldest sister. The *geisha* are women who can be compared only to vivified objects of art, and whose sole rôle is to be lovely and charming. They exemplify the grace of Japan, as the Japanese officers express the spirit of the national honour. The most beautiful stuffs are woven for their robes and their sashes, and the finest of jewels and of lacquer are for their use. They are actresses without a stage, who are sought for their beauty and their wit, their talent of musician-poetesses, and the play of their imagination; and, if they have their loves and their caprices, they are far from being venial. A Japanese in exile regrets a *geisha* as one of the living images of his country. Something of their origin as Shintoist priestesses persists in them, and they symbolize that delicate and noble epicureanism which is the *moral* of Japan.

The Buddhism of Japan—an alien religion—has softened the intrinsic egoism of this epicureanism. The metaphysics of this faith are profound, its morals are ascetic and sublime, and its doctrine is one of

renunciation and of a universal goodness. Its positive action is comparable to that of Christianity or to that of the epicureanism of antiquity. But Buddhism has never been a faith which permitted persecutions, and it has allowed pagan temples to sleep in their ancient peace. It has concentrated its force in converting to its doctrines the most sensitive, the most highly-developed and the most disenchanted minds. These it has led to a moral perfection by the passion it instils for artistic perfection, since art presupposes in the first degree renunciation and concentration on one's inner development; and, according to the laws of Japanese Buddhism, the experienced man who comes to its temples to find peace must become an artist before he can be a saint. The influence of Buddhism is waning to-day, but for twelve centuries it was a school of idealism. It formed great spirits, tortured by the nostalgia of the infinite, and on the other hand saints so tender and so saturated with peace that they are comparable to our Francis of Assisi. Scarcely an Eastern art has not emanated from it; scarcely any activity of Eastern life has escaped its transforming touch. It has penetrated vast masses of people by the sense of mystery, by a silent goodness, and a belief in the mystic solidarity of souls; all that transcends reason and which the heart divines.

The virility of the Japanese nature has emanated from Confucianism. Since the gradual subsidence of the influences of Buddhism, those of Confucianism have made a more and more penetrative progress. Confucianism is a philosophy, and above all a systematized morality, whose principles, borrowed from the Chinese classics, have been adapted by the Japanese to the particularities of their character.

Its principal tenet deals with the principles of honour, or, to speak more exactly, the morality of deportment. From their earliest school days, children are taught what is called in Japanese the art of managing the body, which embraces everything from cleanliness to self-mastery. They learn, and they learn as an art, to control their tears, their anger and their fear. They are given an heroic education which is without concession or attenuation. The rarest courage is presented to them as a simple necessity of propriety. A physician never hides from a patient the gravity of his condition: it would be an insult to expose him to the failure of a ceremonious propriety in the face of death. At the beginning of the war with Russia I was frequently enabled to observe the departure of troops from small wayside stations. The function never varied. The geisha of the village, in their loveliest robes and most elaborate head-dresses, gathered to offer the soldiers a last cup of tea; they passed through the ranks smiling and bending in salutation. The priests distributed their amulets, to the lightest sound of laughter, which seemed to indicate that if these little objects could do no good at least they did not harm. Finally, with the approach of the parents and wives, came the instant when the men seemed most fully aware that they were going on their way to a desired death. In Japan people neither embrace nor shake hands; their expression was therefore limited to two inclinations, two long looks, and two smiles. It was impossible to detect a cry or a tear. One divined that the pain was none the less penetrative, but that it was a law scrupulously to repress it until privacy was reached. It is a Japanese proverb that the pillow alone shall know one's tears.

In a country where the values are so nicely balanced, people need a tempered fineness, a stoicism and a steadiness of bearing to escape dissolution of character. This hard discipline, which is not inspired by nature but inculcated by education, gives Japan its moral tone, and in the face of danger what is called in Japanese national unanimity. It is an astonishing fact that among this nation of epicureans there are no anarchists, no dilettanti and no idlers. Artisan and artist are equally faithful to their work and, when need arises, to their national duty. In the flash of an instant the nation can become a unanimous whole and one Japanese indistinguishable from another.

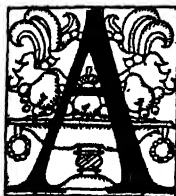
At the beginning of the war with China the Emperor left his palace and went to live in a cottage, to range himself with the humblest of his subjects. The gravity with which each Japanese lives his personal life is equally applicable to his part in the collective effort, and is a form of his consecration to deportment. Here is evidenced the miracle of Japan: an artistic sensibility which is so highly refined united to an immutable military discipline; an island of poets which is the most unified nation of to-day.

# THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN



# THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN

## I



HAIKAI is a Japanese poem in three verses, or a phrase in three short members, the first of five syllables, the second of seven and the third of five : seventeen syllables in all. It is of the most elementary poetic construction ; indeed, it is a question whether one can venture to define as poetry a stanza of three verses, in which there is no regard for rhyme, for quantities or for accentuation, and where even the number of syllables admits some licence. A haikai can be compared neither to a Greek nor Latin distich, nor to a French quatrain. It is neither a "thought," nor a "word," nor a proverb ; an epigram in neither the modern sense nor in the antique, which is rather an inscription. It is the simplest picture, in three movements of the brush, a sketch which is a brief touch or impression. The abstract is entirely deleted. Its syntax is elliptical to excess. With three rapid notations, a landscape or the vision of a scene is composed. All the poetic effort is bent on the choice of those three suggestive sensations which must give birth to a train of others.

In his study of the haikai, Mr. Basil Hall Chamber-

lain \* calls them "the lyric epigrams of Japan." This title defines two of their essential qualities—brevity and the power of suggestion. The lyric epigram has scarcely any analogy in Occidental poetry. It is a perfect exemplary of the Japanese spirit; its terseness holds even in the realms of emotion and ideality. It discloses what is the most intimate trait of their nature and their most inveterate tendency: the instinct of concentration.

The lyric epigram is one of the accepted forms of Japanese art; it carries the general character of all Japanese expression in a simplification so rigorous that it is audacious. One can compare a haikai to a Japanese sketch which encloses, in a few precise strokes, either the subtlest details of a human chronicle or the spaces of an infinite landscape. In the first instance the pencil has traced words, and in the second visual traits; but the eye has seen the same vision. In the course of a trip through Japan, I had as companion a young painter who noted alternately, in a sketch and in a haikai, the impressions of our journey.

Both poetry and painting—one frequently a translation of the other—have had the same evolution. The haikai, whose origin is as remote as the end of the fifteenth century and whose greatest vogue was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, developed contemporaneously with the

\* B. H. Chamberlain, "Basho and the Japanese Poetical Epigram," in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. XXX, Part II.

I have borrowed from Mr. Chamberlain some historical notes on Basho and some of the most charming of the examples he quotes. I desire also to acknowledge my debt to the erudition of my friend M. C.-E. Maitre, who gives a substantial notice on the haikai in the *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*.



popular school of painting, Ukyoe. Their name signifies comic, vulgar, popular. It is not their concision which distinguishes them from the uta or classic poems. A uta, indeed, has only thirty-one syllables; its form is that of a haikai to which two verses of seven syllables have been added. The line of demarcation between the two is rather in the choice of subject. The classic poetry of the uta corresponds to the classic painting of the School of Kano. There is the same nobility of inspiration, the same refinement of form, and the same traditional treatment of flowering cherries, of reddened maples, of the October moon, of the austere Chinese landscapes and of all the subtle inspirational subjects of Chinese poetry. They had the same public: the courts of the Emperor and Regent, the princesses, the great nobles with a taste for letters, and the prelates with a taste for æsthetics. The haikai represent realistic painting. No subject is forbidden to them; all the aspects of Japan meet in them and all Japanese life can seethe in their brief compass. No object is so fantastic and no action so ordinary that it cannot inspire a haikai. A word of slang or a foreign twist to language often gives them their savour. It is a form of expression which is without crippling restrictions, and it is essentially the poetry of the class not privileged to wear two sabres.

At that epoch when their beauty was at its height, the haikai were composed by mystical priests like Basho, revolutionary painters like Buson, and naturalistic romancers like Saikaku, by philosophers baying at the moon, by pilgrims who dreamed in the starlight, by all that vagabond company which treads the footpaths of Japan. It was this strange

admixture of men, sometimes rascals but always artists, who undertook to reduce all their experience to scraps of poetry.

Until to-day the uta and the haikai have followed parallel ways. A general and a university professor will write in the uta form. They retouch a syllable or two of an ancient poem, as a Kyoto painter imitates, with imperceptible changes, a painting of Motonobu or Okyo. It is the journalists who write the haikai. The war with Russia brought forth hundreds of them, in the same way in which it gave subjects of popular interest to the artists.

A mind entirely consecrated to the notation of delicate differences would give, in Japan, only a brief consideration to these haikai, just as a real chajin would glance only cursorily at the work of Hokusai and Hiroshige. But the realistic art of Japan essentially appeals to a quality in the European intelligence. To appreciate a uta it is necessary to have both the Chinese and the Japanese classic education. A haikai, on the contrary, even in its translated form instantly strikes us. It resumes a vision, directly addressed to the eye; it is a rapid impression which may awaken some sleeping sensation. Its complete import is doubtless lost for any but a Japanese, and we cannot perceive its delicate resonances. But across the foreign words some drift of meaning comes to us, like the sound of a cithar from behind a screen or the scent, through a fog, of plum-trees in flower.

## 2

The diversity of the haikai is best shown by a division of their subjects into three groups: those

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which deal with animals, trees and flowers, those which deal with landscape, and finally those treating of a characteristic scene, the significance of a moment or the hidden sense of an action.

The power to create at a stroke a visual picture of the life of an animal is the least contested talent of the Japanese. Their marvellous penetration of the animal world is universally recognized. They have the qualities essential to deal in it—a patience which derives and combines, a rapidity of glance which simplifies, and an intelligence which instinctively animates with life the object seen. Their *kakemono*, their silks, and even their household utensils are ornamented with cranes, with wild geese, with deer, with monkeys and with carp, painted with a sense of freshness and a fidelity to life which Pisanello alone is capable of recalling. The makers of the *haikai* vied in this field with the painters. Their sketches in words would have delighted Jules Renard. As examples, we have the white heron in its dreamy immobility :

Save for his thin voice  
The motionless heron  
Is but a drift of snow.

Sōkan, 1465-1554.

Sometimes the movement alone is preserved :

A long line of wild geese  
Against the lonely peak,  
In the moonlight.  
Buson.

Or the butterfly :

A fallen petal  
Rises to its branch :  
Ah, a butterfly !

Arakida Moritake, 1472-1549.

The last example is typical. A brief astonishment is the definition of the essence of the haikai. A delicate shock is its method of impression. The sudden and the unexpected are the fundamental bases of its treatment. The three little verses seem composed to define a visual surprise. For example, this little scene is that which meets a traveller when, in the freshness of earliest morning, he approaches a Buddhist temple, at the same moment when the priest, still half asleep, strikes the bronze bell with his huge hammer :

A mountain temple . . .  
The bell, at daybreak,  
Scatters afar the crows !

Yokoi Yayu, 1702-1783.

And one's eye follows to the farthest distance the flight of the birds.

To the Japanese a sketch of an animal necessarily evokes more than it does for us. Whether Buddhist or Shintoist, he believes himself to be created of the same essence as beasts. The mind of the Japanese poet has an almost childish ingenuousness which puts him on a par with the direct action of the animal world. Not that he for a moment attempts to liken it to the human world ; he tries, on the contrary, to penetrate these rudimentary beings with a regard for the integrity of their minute dreaming souls, whether they show themselves ill-natured, ardent, or vindictive, and with the understanding that they are always puerile. The form of the lyric epigram, which would be almost absurdly terse for an expression of human psychology, seems to him perfectly adjusted to define an action of the animal consciousness. He regrets, with a vivid intensity, the limitations of his instinct

which rob him of the capacity to feel the little flame of desire burning in the butterfly :

The flowery dream  
Of the butterfly, I seize it . . .  
But it is gone.

Reikan.

A Chinese philosopher had written a treatise on this "flowery dream" of the butterfly; and in the margin the poet put this haikai as a commentary, half touching and half satirical, on the attempt to dogmatize beauty.

He divines with no less sensitiveness the dream of the wandering trout, of the swallow who never ceases his flight, of the inquisitive sparrow, of the placid buffalo and the wild boar's stupid appetite for plunder. He has neither disdain nor indifference for any member of the animal kingdom. Their small desires and their monotonous hopes interest him. He turns most naturally to those whose incipient consciousness seems to him suffering or touched by nostalgia: to the apes shivering in the winter rain, the deer which cries out to an invisible mate, to the new-born mice, searching for the protection of their parents, and to the fire-flies with light in the heart of their tiny bodies. Insects, above all, appeal to him, such infinitely little creatures and so nearly invisible that he knows of them only the thin sound of their voices through the dark; yet a sound of such vastness that it seems to him the voice of the earth itself.

The vegetable world is painted with the same sureness of observation as the animal, the same gift of infusing life, the same delicate tenderness. The Japanese imagination seems to glide from one to the other, in a like effusion.

A tree becomes a living being, of a felt and recognized charm. The willow flings out its soul through the spring mists in the sensitive swaying of its fringes. The cedar lifts itself in a tranquillity full of force; the hollow camphor is racked by an ugly secret, and the bamboo is as slim and fine as a geisha of Kyoto. Each tree has, to the Japanese perception, its favourite seasons and haunts. Winter rejoices the black pines, rising from stretches of silver slopes, and autumn strikes into life, in the valleys, the glory of maples and the gold of the *icho*.

Certain flowers, which seem to have the subtleties of a secret feeling, draw and hold the Japanese poet's attention. Basho is a little disdainful of the crude magnificence of the chrysanthemum, which seems to him as inanimate as porcelain. He prefers the high-bred orchid to the camellia, and paints still more feelingly the hedge flowers in their frail beauty. In them he feels the nascent soul which inspires his own emotion. The hill-side flowers seem to him to open to the passion of the wind as he opens his own heart; the thistles and the cumin quiver under the first breath of autumn more sensitively than he, and the violets keep silent in themselves all the fever of spring.

A Japanese is accustomed to place a flower in his room not as an ornament but as a companion. Many of the lyric epigrams play on this refinement of taste. The poppy is even frailer than a sick child :

Alone, in the room  
Where no soul exists,  
A tall white poppy.  
Buson.

## THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN 43

The lily is as capricious and impressionable as a young girl :

The evening's cold  
Touches the pallid lily's skin  
Before it touches me.

Isshu.

Buddhism has exalted in the Japanese that sympathy for everything animate which is natural, it seems, to the various Asiatic peoples. The haijin, or makers of haikai, were for the most part priests who practised both their cult and their art in a wide range of human contact. They formed a third order of poetical Buddhism. A universal pity was the first article of their rule. It was a necessary result of their tradition and training that, into the light silhouettes of thought which they so freely sketched, there should creep something deeper than an amused curiosity. Their thin brushes express, at a stroke and spontaneously, a little of the vast Buddhist tenderness.

Absorbed in his passionately exact measurement of the suggestive power of every word, the adept haijin has known how to profit by the particular train of thought which certain names awaken in the Japanese. He cites the cherry blossom, and his reader instinctively evokes the superb and fragile honour of the Samurai ; the lotus rises to the surface of thought like the mirages of Amida and with the misty presentiment of future worlds. The pine brings to mind the dignity and magnificence of age and awakens a longing for longevity ; and in a haikai like that of Nishiyama Soin :

Between the hedges of two gardens  
Floating, swaying, floating,  
A willow . . .

he Japanese instinctively translates the verse into the troubled vision of a woman vibrating between two loves.

This sense of symbolic value carries to the Japanese consciousness a concomitant drama. The sudden apparition of a blossom strikes light from the greyness of reality, as in the following :

Blind with memories  
I mounted to the ruins :  
And all was eglantines in flower.

This is the essence of the haikai : a rapid touch, laid lightly on the senses ; a pure high note, which creates in us, as it reverberates and dies, its own harmonies.

## 3

The three quick glimpses which make the vision of the haikai can evoke for us the breadth of a landscape even more exactly than they can particularize the fine fabric of detail. Their brevity is compact with so much force that it expresses the immense more readily than it does the miniature. They carry the resonance of a vibration which indefinitely enlarges itself. Indeed the haikai are above all notable for the vastness of their interpretation of nature. The term "picture" fails to compass their extent ; they are rather drops of the essence of poetry, each of which mirrors the whole of Japan.

Sometimes these haikai assemble the quick notations of a traveller :

A mountain cottage,  
And by the well  
A plum-tree flowering.  
Kikwan.



## THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN 45

In the trembling sunlight,  
In golden grain,  
A water-mill.

Buson.

At times the notation is even briefer :

A boat and its net  
Fade into shadow.  
Evening's freshness.

Buson.

Suddenly,  
In the autumn sky,  
Mount Fuji !

Onitsura, 1661-1738.

The haijin have always tasted all the salience of their native land. While the classic poets entwined their dreams about China and admired in Japan only a limited number of landscapes so famous that they were consecrated by general appreciation and thus corresponded to the canon of Chinese perfection, the rougher makers of the haikai loved the soil in all the sharp characterization of its peculiarities. Their thought scaled the mountainous islands whose relief is so accentuated and so original and the edges of which, in the finest mists, dissolve into the sea with no less harmony than that with which spring dissolves into summer. "Too delicious a country," as Kipling has said, "to be soiled by a pen." The haikai is, perhaps, the only touch light and fragmentary enough to express it.

With their parasols of straw, swinging their bells at the top of which tinkled two bronze rings, their robes tucked up and the baskets containing their tiny braziers slung on their backs, the haijin were always afoot on their æsthetic pilgrimages. They experienced all the marvels and adventures of ancient

Japan, which one recreates from the albums of Hokusai—the *Tokaido* or the *One Hundred Views of Fuji*—from the old account of Kaempfer or, better still, from the passionate austerity of the letters of St. Francis Xavier. They caught the water of countless torrents in their tiny cups; they lay at night in the open fields and fell in with the turbulent processions which followed the daimyos. Since they had nothing to lose, they had frank and easy intercourse even with ruffians and at times they made poets out of thieves. As they carried no arms, they were not stopped at the barriers of Hakone. When they approached the famous temples, they hung their well-worn sandals on a tree as a votive offering; and, packed in the swaying crowd of pilgrims, they listened in absorption to the local saintly legend, droned in the nasal voice of the beadle. In an access of devotion they plunged into the pond of Fudo, tossed a stone to the knees of the statue of Jisô, patron saint of travellers, and, in intention of humility, rubbed devoutly the shoulder of the unfaithful Disciple. Above all they had a sense of splendid indignation when they saw the profanation of neglect in those places which history had made sacred, as in the following :

Behold the tomb  
Of the hero Kaneshira :  
Now only pale green rice !

Kikwan.

April found them entranced before the cherry-trees of Yoshino, and June knee-deep in the poppies of Hasedera. In these effulgent months they steadily drained their gourds of sake, and with their cheeks burning they often fell asleep amongst the flowers. Most frequently they made their journeys alone,

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with a sense of the calm security of the open fields ;  
but they loved to haunt the foreign markets and  
listen to the murmur of gossip which rose up with  
each dawn.

They traversed little villages in the golden dust  
of thrashed wheat. When they lifted their eyes to  
find kites in the sky they knew that a city was near ;  
their fatigue fell from them and their steps hastened  
with the hope of rest :

Joy !  
I approach Nara,  
And I laugh at the rain.  
Shorio.

In winter they sought their shelter from house to  
house :

All doors are closed,  
The length of the street,  
To the lantern and the snow.

They knew the gross surprises of the life of the  
wayside inn and the intimate charm of accidental  
hospitality ; and they paid their host by reading to  
him a set of poems, or made for him a little epigram  
of farewell. Then once more they took the road,  
almost always on foot, against wind and rain and  
under the snow and the flame of the dog-days, the  
doors of their senses thrown open and their spirits  
full of the brief flash of that haikai which they would  
carve on a hill-side rock or tie, with a thread of silk,  
to a flowering branch.

It was instinctive with the haijin to try to fix his  
impression of a brief spectacle, and he did it with the  
eye of a painter, as in the following :

What commotion ! . . .  
Under the sudden shower,  
The sails swing towards us and away !

A scene frequently owes the savour of its charm to a single detail :

Pilgrims on the road . . .  
Their bells swing  
Above the harvest.

Isshu.

This type of haikai is purely pictorial ; it even expresses a kind of visible humour. Properly speaking, a haikai cannot be witty because it is devoid of reflection or comment. Its resumption is entirely visual.

We always feel behind this vision the personality, so to speak, of a particular eye. Through the charm of the detail noted there penetrates that special quality which appealed to a special appreciation in the author. The three touches of verse are alive with the selective intention which brought them together. They inevitably betray the sentiment, whether frivolous or serious, which animated their composer and show the genesis of an emotion, whether grave or fine, which has all the personality of a definite individual and of a definite instant. In this sense, a haikai is an equal definition of a state of mind and a state of soul. It is thus that it reveals to us all Japan, the delicate fall of its rains and the variations of its skies, the rich mixture of its verdure, the arched bridges bright with the colours of a crowd, the villages sunk to the knees in harvest, the sacred forests dim with the diffusion of a spiritual light, the tiny temples of the country-side where, behind an open screen, a worm-eaten statue of the god smiles in the shadow, the peaks and the sea—all that goes into the fabric of that landscape which seems made of a living silk, embroidered with

fringed and snow-crowned islands. But it also reveals to us in perfection a racial genius which is unique, a completely original sentiment for nature, and the drift of the dreams of a people whose receptivity invariably takes the form of art.

We are perpetually struck by the Japanese taste for a country-side seen under snow or under moonlight. It is possible to explain this tendency by reasons entirely connected with the pictorial sense. Snow at once simplifies masses and places them in proper relation. It prepares the contexts and contrasts of the painter by throwing certain objects into the foreground and softening the accents of others.

Moonlight is no less important in establishing the plane of values. It enwraps verdure, it touches with a silent mystery the tops of sleeping houses, and it rests on a tree in flower with the light of death. Its luminousness has the highest force and intensity of concentration. But there are additional reasons for the haijin's ardour for the vibrant tremulousness of moonlight and the frail mirages of the snow. It is instinctive with him, the more his powers of appreciation are educated and specialized, to have his admiration warm to emotion. The exquisite monotony of a snowy country-side and the poignancy of diffused moonlight penetrate him, without complexity and reaction, and soften all his thought. It is in these simpler manifestations of beauty that nature seems most clearly in unison with him. The frozen landscape touches him with a peculiar intimacy:

Long, long,  
The lonely line of a river  
In a land covered with snow.  
School of Basho.

The omnipresent beauty of the moon is in these two little nocturnes :

A rainy night,  
And everywhere, on everything,  
A pale luminance.

Etsujin.

In the long summer rains,  
One night, furtively,  
The moon in the pines.

Riôta, 1719-1789.

The fairy-like fineness of these spectacles seems to him a largess for rich and poor alike :

The grey villages,  
Without gold or flowers,  
To-night have the moon.

Saikaku, 1641-1693.

Both snow and moon are universal to him, and carry some of the quality of eternity.

We touch, at this point, a vital characteristic of this special atavism. The most distinguished and distinguishing emotion, to a Japanese, is not joy but a delicate pain, refined and spiritualized by the poetic apprehension. This is, perhaps, another result of Buddhism, which enjoins a faith and a charity without hope, which knows no Church triumphant, and which puts sorrow into its paradise. The old poem of the uta expresses to satiety the charms of melancholy. It analyses the particular moment when the cry of pines in the wind is most despairing ; it feels love most keenly in suffering and sees the face of nature in its greatest beauty through tears.

Though less exclusively dedicated to this attitude, the trend of the haikai is in the same direction. Landscapes of gaiety are rarely noted ; one of the

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few of Ransetsu carries some of the light movement of a holiday :

A cold clear New Year's Day,  
A cold clear sky, and the  
Chattering sparrows.

It is on a grey canvas that the memories of the haikai detach themselves most richly and that their expression of fugitive sensation attains the poignancy of perfection :

The sharp breath of autumn,  
A lantern flashes afar . . .  
Dusk.

Buson.

Stillness ! Through  
The rainy midnight,  
The sound of a bell. . . .  
Kikaku.

Amongst the scattered pines,  
Lighting, dying, lighting,  
The fire-flies.

Hakuyu.

A graveyard,  
And here, and there,  
The fire-flies of autumn.

School of Kikaku.

Between the three little lines one feels the implacable cold of death. The haikai convey, in an instantaneous flash, the impression of the flight of time. More sensible than we to the brevity of human existence, the Japanese note the imperceptible stages of its passage. They instinctively fix and embalm the memory of an instant :

Flame beneath the ashes,  
A house beneath the snow.  
Midnight.

Buson.

They watch the slow rotation of natural phenomena, with a sense of differences in the different hours which is vivid to the point of lending each a personal quality. They know the hour of the bind-weed, six o'clock in the morning, when the corolla of the opening world is steeped in freshness; midday is to them the hour of the greatest beauty of the ivy, when even the dark leaves shine with the sun's radiation; dusk the hour of most delicate sensitiveness, when we are open to the touch of any impression :

Hour of velvet soft-winged bats . . .  
The soft-eyed maid  
Throws me a velvet glance.

Buson.

Above all they know that pale hour which has a special name in their language, and when, before the sun has risen, the moon has not yet died. They follow the light changes of atmosphere no less than they follow the succession of the seasons. The sense of sequences runs throughout their thought and illustrates their profoundly rooted continuities. Their vignettes are thus not only notations but definitions of a state of mind. Each scene has a significance. All the movements of nature become human gestures and her total immobility measures itself against the fugacity of the individual life. The discontinuities of experience conform at last to the certain rhythm of the great metamorphoses, and the waves of accident scatter into foam against the inflexibility of eternal order.



## 4

To the haijin, as well as to the painter, landscape is the supreme inspiration. Human incidence in the haikai is a light diversion and the poet never accords the individual case, no matter how striking or how distinguished in its manifestation, the same artistic value which he gives to a sketch from nature.

In the sixteenth century, Matahei, who was entrusted with the decoration of the palace of Nagoya, made a new departure when he covered the fine screens of the interior with human figures. He divided his vast landscape into sections, alive with illustrations of personal activity. The life of the period flows richly and actually across the folds; the stir of colour and the long rhythm of the movement are those of a Japanese Watteau. The detail is precise, the costumes exact in all their beauty and the gestures never fail to be salient. Public taste was surfeited with the sombre and magnificent refinement of the Ashikaga, in its Japanese reflection of the Sung period. The popular eye was beginning to find the Sesshu landscapes thin, in their unity of tone and their attempt still further to simplify an extreme simplicity. A new wave of Chinese influence had broken and passed. The sumptuous Ming, with its golden embroideries, its peacocks and rare flowers, its rivers of goldsmith's work and its dedication to magnificence of colour, was the fitting expression of the passion for luxury of the epoch of Hideyoshi. Into the splendours of this romanticism, Matahei, in his art, infused realistic expression. The battle of artistic formulæ was as ardent in the Japan of the sixteenth as in France of



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The steps of him I wait,  
How far they sound . . . faint  
Upon the fallen leaves !

Buson.

We see also in actuality the wood-cutter's wife, carrying on her head the bundle of sticks to which she has added, for her sense of beauty, some scarlet leaves ; the young wife, with her head weighted by her heavy hair and her long neck of old ivory. Each one only passes and has time to make only a single gesture. It is the extreme use of the vital instant or the evocative attitude, as in the following, of Kikin, when we get the concentrated force of the turbulence in a young girl's heart :

" 'Tis summer has made me thin and sad ! "  
But as she speaks  
Her heart breaks in tears.

The haijin, poetic vagabond as he was, could never resist making his caricature of the people he met on his way : the garrulous gardener, the hunter with his bow and arrow, awaiting a quail, the light-hearted workman, a handkerchief about his head and his pipe thrust in his belt. He watched the trembling flame of the fire of hemp kindled on a fisherman's boat and followed with his eye a traveller across a bridge whose length is proverbial :

Under the beating rain  
A man runs the long length  
Of the bridge of Seta.

Joso.

In winter he catches the attitude of people who bend before the wind and lift their frozen hands to their lips. He is amused at the expense of an *élégant*, with his head enveloped in a silk veil, as he

swings his inlaid sabre and waves his fan. The haijin himself carries only his old umbrella :

The moon casts sudden shadows  
Of my tattered umbrella,  
In the autumn rain.

Buson.

He follows above all the life of the priests, with whom he generally is or has been affiliated. He knows the secret corridors of temples; he has seen the gods from behind the scenes, and has examined their grotesque or pitying faces without fear. Buson gives us a delightful series of ecclesiastical types: the great Shintoist, in his white splendour, the meditative old bonze whose only occupation is to gather his lotus flowers; the necromancer making his incantations in the smoking fire of benzoin; the penitent pilgrim hidden under his vast straw hat; and the monk in his insatiate search for alms, who never ceases to strike the little bell hanging against his breast :

Along the winding road  
The psalmody of begging monks  
Goes wandering.

It is singular that amongst this catholic collection almost none is satiric. To the Gallic apprehension, the short poem which depicts the intensification of personality is almost invariably pitched in that tone. It is the French sense, indeed, of the word epigram. In this interpretation the haikai, practically without exception, could not be called epigrams. They express no action of raillery, but a comment made for the direct pleasure in its creation, and are far removed from the biting brilliance of Boileau or Piron. The salt of French

epigrams is almost always in their play of words; they are very justly called *mots*: "Piron was nothing, not even an Academician"; "Eglé composes his visage and does not compose his verse." They are light lashes of the tongue. The haikai is a *coup d'œil*. It is limited by the limitation of a glance; it is scarcely even a caricature, since a caricature would presuppose the interposition of an idea between the eye and the object seen.

But if the outlining of the silhouette betrays a feeling—since, in the last analysis, all composition is conscious—that feeling is almost invariably one of an indefinite sympathy, which extends from a benevolent curiosity to the profundities of pity. To ridicule is only to play at wit, and the haikin's wit is touched by his heart. His compassion is sometimes superficially mute but always sensitive:

The weary carrier  
Travels his road, and never sees  
The mountain cherries.

Buson.

The poet, with no other burden than that of enjoying the spring flowers, has the sense of a certain remorse because of his privileges, as he watches the heavily-laden man who has neither time nor strength to lift his eyes.

Wanderer as he is, he has a vital comprehension of human misery. His contacts are far from that dream of moonlight and flowers in which the poet of the uta uniquely exists. He knows that the grinding noise of a little saw, through the night, means that somewhere a workman is struggling to gain his bread; he has divined the instinctive effort of the woman who gleans to remain in the sun, as

she creeps forward in her work, because her rags scarcely cover her body; and the three brief lines are moist not only with the freshness of the first dew but with the beauty of tears.

The emotion trembling through the little poems at times vibrates as far as the realm of philosophic sentiment. In the following haikai is given an example of the continuity of the Japanese vision of life and of their custom, on every New Year's Day, to plant before each house a pine as the symbol of perpetuity:

Pines at the doorway!  
They mark the miles  
Of the road to eternity.

Raizan, 1654-1716.

The next, still more philosophic in tone, gives us in a flash the unbroken flow of human experience, with all the Buddhistic disenchantment. Its use of interruption is more than a striking means of expression and impression, and symbolizes the image of the sensible world:

They spread their beauty—And  
We watch them—And  
The flowers turn and fade—And . . .

Onitsura.

The third is one of the most purely exquisite of all haikai. Its pessimism is veiled by a half-shame-faced epicureanism, which is none the less enjoyed with the savour of a sin. "World of dew" is the usual dogmatic term of the priests, to designate the fugacity of things:

This world of dew  
Is, alas, only a world of dew!  
Yet, none the less . . .

Issa, 1763-1827.

This is a resumption of the haijin's creed. He is to perfection a fervent Buddhist, who doubts neither the sublimity of his doctrine nor the efficaciousness of his morality. He practises mercy to men and to animals, to plants and to demons. Seventy times each day he concentrates his thought at that point in his belief where all creatures confound themselves in a unique being. But he cannot deny that fact evidenced by his senses—that, in the appalling journey of the human consciousness to the final abyss of nothingness, there are none the less lovely moments. He looks with all his consistency at the inconsistent face of this world of unrealities; yet he finds it beautiful to look at.

On the rare occasions when the haijin expresses a direct personal sentiment, he reverts to that impassioned contemplation which is his vocation. He is far from the man whose intoxication is metaphysical: the noise of a frog diving in the still of a pond can stir the finest fibres of his imagination. In the series of his reincarnations he asks nothing more than to be part of the intrinsic beauty of nature and no rôle more splendid than that of the mute immobility of a great tree:

Oh, marvellous moon!  
 Could I be born again  
 A pine set on a peak!

Ryôta.

The fewest words are enough to express his limitless ecstasy. Even the traditional terseness of his medium seemed to him at times too redundant. The poet Teishitsu (1608-1671) burnt all his works with the exception of a single haikai which is only an exclamation:

Ah, Ah !

Is all the heart can say  
Before the flowers of Yoshino.

He had penetrated the essence of the haikai ; the fact that its seventeen syllables are an interjection, a cry which has its meaning only from the depths of the feeling out of which it rises, and only for the sensibility of the ear which hears it.

5

In the innumerable chorus of the makers of the haikai, it is difficult to distinguish special voices. A Japanese can isolate and analyse them ; the Western mind has a deeper pleasure in confounding and generalizing their beauty. The lyric epigram assumes for us the qualities of a national characteristic ; and in each case it is not a particular man, but the entity of Japan, whose expression reaches us.

It is, however, essential to separate from the others the most ardent and penetrative of all, Basho (1644-1694). It was he who gave the haikai its soul ; who transformed it from a delicate amusement and touched it with the purity of a work of art, a work which rose at times to the height of the religious.

His life has a strange context with that of Pascal, whose young contemporary he was, on the farther edge of so widely disparate a world. He was a Japanese Pascal, without the geometrical sense, but equally grave and equally tormented by the desire to discover access to the human heart. His ardently austere youth received its deepest impress from the loss, when he was sixteen, of a friend to



whom he clung with all the passion of life. Basho retired to the monastery of Kôya, the Monte Cassino of Japan, and lived in the midst of nature, of books and of works of art, absorbed in the work of creating his soul. When he finally quitted the convent he went to Edo (the future Tokyo), followed the courses of the most famous teachers of the day, and shortly founded his own school. He was surrounded by priests and men of letters, by merchants and nobles, by women and by children, and was the central point of a circle whose literary authority was almost democratic in quality, in the midst of a strictly hieratical society.

At the age of thirty-eight he experienced the profundities of a second conversion. He studied more deeply the doctrine of the sect of Zen, a kind of Buddhistic Jansenism, but a Jansenism both tolerant and joyous and whose rigidity is tempered by a sense of art and of the charm of human intercourse. A bond of intimate comprehension was woven between him, his professor in Buddhism and a servant of the latter, a man of no education, who had raised his consciousness to a high spiritual illumination. The conflagration of 1683, in which his house and the greater part of Edo were destroyed, was his miracle of the Holy Thorn; he escaped death only by throwing himself into the garden pond, and the experience was a visible illustration of the Buddhistic text that all human life exists only as a house in the midst of flames.

From this moment Basho became an apostle whose ardour was as intrinsic as his gentleness. He used poetry as a means of conversion. When his disciples transgressed the rule of poverty, humility and patience he reprimanded them by saying: "That

is not in the spirit of haikai." More frequently he taught by illustration. He set out with them, through the length and breadth of the country, to give them a sense of communing with mountains and rivers, forests and waterfalls, to show them actual historic spots, and to fulfil the canons of the Buddhistic ideal. He visited with them places consecrated by legend and by heroism, battlefields, tombs and temples, and landscapes celebrated for their beauty, seeking everywhere not facts but an edification of the spirit. His aim was not science but illumination, in the Buddhistic sense. Basho was himself an accomplished mystic. He realized in actuality the precepts of the Zen doctrine—that doctrine of ecstasy which, using art as its instrument of stimulation, carries its followers to the very summit of pure contemplation; a doctrine at once powerful and gentle, and under whose influence have developed those virtues of simplicity, nobility and grace and that sobriety of good taste which is immanent in the art of ancient Japan.

In the costume of the poorest pilgrim, Basho travelled with two or three disciples, his only burden a set of writing implements and a few books. He slept at inns or in wayside huts. At times his reputation brought him an invitation from some powerful personage; in such instances he refused any formality of reception and accepted for himself and his companions only a bowl of cold rice, served by the master of the house and not by his servants. Without any attitude of prudery, he led a life which was extreme in its purity—a rare instance in the midst of the licence of the first century of the Tokugawa. His principal precepts were never to give way to anger and to

practise charity to all living things. This tenderness for beasts and flowers became the most accentuated characteristic of the school.

His disciples educated themselves to an elevation worthy of him. Three of them, including Kikaku and Ransetsu, who came from surroundings of riches and culture, lived together in a little room without other furnishing than a teapot and a kettle, and with its only ornament a statue of the child Buddha in a niche. They shared a single mattress, which was so short that their feet protruded beyond it; and when the cold was too bitter they went out of doors and composed their haikai. Throughout Japan Basho left his trace in this half-convent, half-studio life. He never tired of inculcating into his pupils the fact that in order to be poets they must infuse poetry into their lives. He rarely spoke of art in any artificial isolation, and made little of the pretended rules of inventive processes. In composing he was in the habit of saying, "Do not compose too much. You will lose what springs from nature; let your haikai rise from your heart." He wrote to a correspondent: "Your zeal in creative work is the best of news; but the heart is more important than any erudition. There are many who can turn their three verses; there are few who observe the rules of the heart." Elsewhere he says: "Let your haikai resemble the willow branch, wet with light rain and tremulous in the breeze," defining in this way the fact that the emotion with which the little poems are charged is all their price.

Basho felt only contempt for the banalities of artificial poetry. The haikai were far from unknown before his time; it had, on the contrary, been a

fashion to excel in their composition. For the preceding century and a half, they had been perfected by such successful poets as Sôkan, Moritake, Teitoku, Teishitsu, Soin and Saikaku. There even existed men who made a profession of correction, and who retouched the attempts of beginners. The art was in its fullest vogue, but it was not above the level of a fine play of words. Basho raised it, at a stroke, to a height where he alone could sustain it.

In a letter to a friend he divides the composers of the haikai into three classes: first, those who pass their lives wrangling over the points of correction made by their instructors—"an innocent folly which at times causes them to forget wife, children and liege lord"; secondly, the rich who use poetry as a distraction and are indifferent as to whether the censors give them good or bad criticism—"they resemble children at play"; thirdly, those who make poetry with their hearts and who use it as a means to attain the philosophic and mystic life—"of these there are scarcely a dozen in all the empire."

He died at the age of fifty. On the day of his death he seated himself on his bed, his closest disciples facing him and the others on either hand. He sent messages to several pupils and charged those who were present to grant pardon to a disciple whom he had been forced to dismiss from the band for a grave offence; then, joining his hands, he recited the sutra of the Goddess of Pity and fell into death as if he fell into sleep.

A list of his effects has been preserved: a statue of Buddha, a copper bowl, a wooden ink-pot, a few books and a few kakemono.

## THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN 65

It was Basho's privilege to regenerate the taste of his day, and his figure dominates an entire epoch of Japanese literature. His haikai, which are difficult for even the Japanese appreciation, are often intelligible only to a mind nourished on Buddhist doctrine, Chinese literature and Japanese history. Those which are accessible to us strike us either by the unforgettable simplification of a single impression, as in the following :

An ancient pond,  
And, when a frog dives,  
A sudden sound in the silence.

Or by so delicate a familiarity with animals that he recalls to us St. Francis of Assisi :

On the flower where it glances,  
Ah, spare the little bee,  
Friend sparrow ! \*

Or above all by the grave and perpetual thought of death :

Death against the heart,  
Nothing announces it  
In the grasshopper's song.

The summer's green !  
All that remains  
Of the dreams of dead warriors.

This last example was written on the site of a battlefield.

\* Kikaku once brought to his master this haikai :

The glorious dragon-fly,  
Strip his wings,  
And he is but a reddened grain.

Basho reproached him for the downward movement of his imagination and corrected the composition as follows :

Lift a reddened grain  
With wings, and behold  
A glorious dragon-fly.

Until about 1720 the school of Basho kept at its height the flame which the Master had kindled. Onitsura, Kikaku, Ransetsu, Kyorai, Joso, Kyoroku, Shiko, Yaha, Etsujin are on a plane with both the beauty and austerity of Basho's composition: some of their epigrams attain the absolute quality of perfection. From 1720 to 1750 a decline is evidenced. The haikai became once more a play of wit, often nothing more fundamental than a charming enigma. But in the second half of the eighteenth century there was a renascence of the real haikai. The great haijin of this period was Buson (1716-1783). He was a painter of Kyoto, with a sharply defined independence and originality of spirit. At Kinkakuji there are two rooms decorated by him, in a few strokes of brown and ochre, showing an execution at once brutal and confident. The peninsulas advancing into the waters of his lakes are peopled with trees bent by the tempest; on the lakes are laden rafts, which make their slow progress by means of the long boat-hooks in the hands of the sailors. The pilgrim who leaps to the bank recalls the sketch in the haikai by the same author:

The boat grounds in sand . . .  
I spring to shore  
Among the violets.

Set in the corners of the composition the rags of scattered groups of beggars infuse a touch of black and of rose. At intervals there is a note of yellow like the melancholy of a Cazin: a cottage with its thatch torn and tattered stands against a horizon of sandy hills. There is a screen by Buson in the Kyoto Museum, painted with wild horses in rare

tints of green, violet, rose and white. The painting is crude and somewhat arid—the white tail of one horse and the whiteness in the water of a cascade have the density of plaster—but it is a profoundly original work, of breadth and of probity, which shows none of the evanescent qualities of the desire to please. During his lifetime, Buson was supremely valued for his haikai; after his death there was a recrudescence of the cult for his paintings; to-day his fame as a poet is again the more accentuated of the two. The dominant note of his haikai is that of his sincere love of the poor and the suffering. They are less profound than the haikai of Basho, less exquisite, less philosophic, more purely picturesque, possibly more varied, and at times of a more simple and poignant humanity. An anthology of the haikai of Buson would give the best idea of all the various resources and expressions of this art.

In the list of the makers of the lyric epigram mention should be made of the poetess Chiyo (1703-1775), who wrote with a delicately feminine accent of compassion. Every Japanese knows the little lines in which she has enclosed the eternity of her grief at the death of her young son :

The little hunter of dragon-flies,  
To what far country  
Has he taken his hunting ?

## 6

The author of a biography of Buson remarks : “European poetry has a power of seduction, but it is superficial. Japanese poetry has little artifice, but it is vivified with soul.” The severity with

which this author limits the field of our poetry should warn us of the difficulties in judging the poetic expression of an alien race. There have been several charming definitions of the haikai, which may attest our appreciation of it. Mr. Chamberlain characterizes it as the opening of a trap-door, for an instant, on a tiny glimpse of life; a half-formed, sudden smile; or a quick sigh, interrupted and dispersed before it has been heard. In his lovely studies of Japan, M. André Bellessort uses particularly happy terms of definition: a poem made of the glimmer of light and the tremulousness of feeling; the perfection of exactitude enveloped in a dream; sparks which light our vision with infinite vibrations of sensibility. He likens the haikai also to delicate old fans which, in the second in which one opens and closes them, flash before one's eyes the miracle of a great landscape.

The Greeks, of certain phases of whose art the Japanese art not infrequently reminds us, believed that one of the characteristics of their poetry was a winged concision. It is interesting to compare with the haikai certain epigrams of the *Anthology*. "The perfect epigram," as Cyrillos puts it, "is in two verses; beyond three it ceases to be an epigram and becomes an epic."

These exquisite distichs are fashioned quite otherwise than the haikai. Instead of the three brief notes of surprise, there are two exclamations prolonged by the rhythm of tragedy. Though they are almost as brief as the haikai, their difference in essence is enclosed in their limited space. They are impregnated with a ritual gravity and a nobility of grandeur, and one feels it their destiny to be inscribed in perpetuity on bronze or marble, and



## THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN 69

not on the light scrap of silk paper which is as tenuous as a flower.

The great columns of Naxos, Megatimos and Aristophoon  
Are planted, oh vast Earth, in thy breast.

Archilochus of Paros.

Alkibe gave her ritual veil of hair  
To Hera, who vouchsafed the sanctity of marriage.

Archilochus.

To the fisher Petagon his father Meniscos consecrates  
His fish trap and his oar, symbols of his hard life.

Sappho.

Prexedike has made it, Dyseris has designed it,  
This sacred mantle : their love has united in it.

Anacreon.

Those who brought to Phæbus the booty of the Tyrrhenians,  
The same sea, the same bark, the same tomb, holds them.

Simonides of Ceos.

The solemn distich falls into the slower movement of mourning in the following :

A child of twelve years ! Philip has laid here  
His son Nicoteles, his only hope.

Callimachus.

Ordinarily the Greek epigrams are composed of two, three or four distichs. Like the haikai they remained an intellectual fashion for centuries. It was a matter of pride to turn them exquisitely and elegantly. Several collections exist of the best amongst them. One constantly notes in these the persistency of the same basic idea which animates the haikai, but its advance is measured to an even tread, instead of a light flight of feet. The *metro-nome* is changed, and instead of the Japanese *prestissimo* there is the calm of *andante*.

There is a curious charm in the contrast between the animals depicted by the haijin and two Greek

epigrams treating of animals, by the poetess Anyte of Tegea, who was the Chiyo of Greece. The first is on a goat :

The children have strapped red reins and a bridle, oh goat, to  
thy bearded chin,  
They sport before the temple, that the god may protect their  
play.

The next is on a dolphin :

Nevermore in the swinging seas shall I lift my dripping head from  
the vast deeps  
And against the brassy prows of ships scatter my watery breath,  
joyous to see my own image.  
The dark waves have beat me to land, and I lie conquered on  
the soft sands of the shore.

The following are two Greek landscapes, by Plato.  
In the first the God Pan speaks :

Sit thee beside this singing pine whose verdure, far above, quivers  
with every air,  
And on thine eyes, beside my tremulous brook, my flute will lay  
sleep's magic.

In the second he is also present :

Hush, and drink from the dryad's rock waters burst from the  
stone. The sheep call to their young.  
It is he who holds the melodious flute. To the gathered reeds  
Pan has touched his moist lips,  
And they cluster around and their restless feet feel for the dance—  
Nymphs of water and Nymphs of the wood,

In the final example the epicurean sense of the  
ephemeral is a far echo of the haijin's Buddhistic  
sense of mortality :

Here, even now, are roses and young peas, and the delicate hearts  
of cabbages, those that are first to be cut,  
And anchovies with their moisture, fresh white cheese, and the  
pale leaves of curled lettuces.

## THE LYRIC EPIGRAMS OF JAPAN 71

Shall we not climb the cliffs and look afar, oh Sosylos, as we have  
done each year? . . .

Behold, Antigene and Bacchios yesterday loved in the sun; to-day  
cold earth receives them.

Philodemus.

In French expression, certain extremely terse poems of Verlaine are perhaps what most intrinsically convey the Japanese essence. Even these contain four or five times as much matter as the Japanese poems. The apparent facility in the construction of a haikai is its most inherent danger. It is the form of literature from which the so-called literary manner is most completely excluded. Since expression is reduced to what may be called a supreme minimum, it is impossible to create in this space an elemental beauty unless one has had an elemental sensation or a genuine emotion. A haikai is, indeed, a pure sensation; and, if this sensation is no more than ordinary in its revelation, the fabric falls to pieces. On the other hand, as a form to phrase in its palpitant purity an acute moment of life, there is perhaps no poetic composition superior to that of the haikai.\*

The interest of such attempts in French is that it shows what an effort of limitation the Western artist must impose on his receptivity in order to condense his feeling into a unique sensation. This

\* Julien Vocance (*Cent visions de guerre*), during the winter of 1914 and the year 1915, in the Champagne trenches where he fought and was wounded, conceived the idea of noting in this form his impressions of the war. The lyric epigram proved to be extraordinarily adapted to express this terrible substance. In my opinion, these haikai of Julien Vocance are worthy to be placed beside the Japanese models, as one of our prints is sometimes hung beside the Japanese example which has inspired so much of its beauty. [Author's Note.]

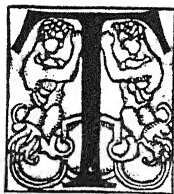
compression is natural to the Japanese poet. It is strange to think that Japanese poetry almost in its entirety—the poetry of thirteen centuries—is composed of these tiny morsels, for the poems of three verses are the primitive poems of five verses divided in half. In the work of all French poets it would be possible to trace passages which, if isolated, would exist as *haikai*. In La Fontaine, above all, there are perfect ones. But all these are inserted in a whole which flows to its own end. The Japanese poet would treat them for their individual value. One notes here an essential divergence between the Japanese and the French; the most fragmentary of the French poets are eminently constructive compared to theirs.

These differences are finally reducible to the elements of psychologic definition. An Occidental mind instinctively constructs; a Japanese mind instinctively dissociates. This is an atavistic tendency, a trend of habit accentuated by early education and at times corrected by advanced instruction. The French child who tries his hand at drawing first makes a house or a man; the little Japanese draws a tree or the curve of a finger-nail. The one reacts at once to the whole; the other, with the immediacy of instinct, to detail. Their differences of impression and of execution are after all differences of immensity, if they have the greatness to integrate their dreams and if one becomes a Corot and the other a Motonobu.

# JAPANESE PATRIOTISM



## JAPANESE PATRIOTISM



**TOKYO**, *6th February* 1904. An imperial decree, published this morning, promulgates the continuance under arms of the marine forces which were shortly to be demobilized. A fact still more serious, and the publication of which has been forbidden, is that the army reservists have been called to the colours. A crowd is gathered about the barracks to acclaim them. There is a general belief that the declaration of war is imminent.

The government keeps the public in complete ignorance of both its intentions and its decisions. An absolute censorship is exercised in regard to all news concerning military operations. Even to-day, when the streets of Tokyo are alive with the excitement caused by the issuance of the call to reservists, the papers refrain from publishing this order. This state of ignorance fails to calm general opinion and definitely exasperates it. During the six months that the government has passed through a period of hesitation and delay, the patriotic and military ardour of the people has been progressively inflamed. From the class of journalists and professors this ardour has penetrated to the merchant class, to workmen and to women. My rickshaw man has fervent visions of the conquest of Korea ; a charm-

ing young lady told me yesterday that her two brothers have joined the colours and that she herself is enlisted as a nurse. Nothing in Japan equals the popularity of the Red Cross, and every mousmé wishes to crown her dark hair with a white muslin cap. The little soldiers one passes in the streets, with all their straps tightly buckled and their equipment shining, are red with the excitement of anticipation. No war has ever been acclaimed here with a more universal popularity, and there has never been a more unbroken confidence in victory. The government, which alone could define for the country the actuality of the difficulties to be overcome, is silent, and this silence augments the general confidence.

It is interesting that the commercial class are the most keenly enthusiastic for the war. Possibly they foresee a stimulation of trade. It is they who swell the membership of the many national leagues recently founded, and who are most noticeable at patriotic banquets. At the moment they have collected two million yen as a war subscription. With them must be ranged the instructors and professors, who have had a paramount influence in transforming what was in reality a war of conflicting interests into a war of an almost sacred enthusiasm. The patriotic intensity of hatred for Russia is not new in Japan. The smallest school-child is sensitive to the stigma of the ceding of Sakhaline, in 1875, in exchange for a group of valueless islands; above all he is aware of the fact that the Russians deprived Japan of the fruits of her conquests in China. Every one quotes the teacher who taught his pupils to walk on the snow, in order to accustom them to the climate of the



enemies of Japan. There is acute appreciation of the fact that what Russia now menaces is Corea, the country twice conquered by Japan and the goal of her secular ambition ; and this at a moment when Japan is stronger than at any previous period of her history, when she has emerged victorious from two wars and when she owns the largest armoured ships in the world. This is the belief of the little Japanese and what inspires his impatience for departure ; it is evident this people has had no education in the spirit of defeat.

While all the action of the government isolates it from the nation at large, the people are concomitantly conscious of a complete unanimity of determination. The vivifying force of this enthusiasm is such that if, at the moment, the Japanese obtained by diplomacy all the advantages they hope to achieve, there would exist an inevitable disappointment. They are keyed up to the ardour of a war with a European power, in order to astonish Europe ; and they are convinced that any concessions on the part of Russia would bear the stamp of perfidy.

With war openly desired by those business interests hostile to Russia and passionately longed for by the nation at large, the issues, as it seems, have been determined by a silent and circumspect government. The Japanese fleet is concentrated between Sasebo and Tsushima ; the people have heard, with some anxiety, that the Russian fleet has left Port Arthur for an unknown destination ; they can only await developments.

*8th February.* The various journalists are summoned to meet this evening at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to receive an announcement from

Baron Komura. In these eight months of waiting for a definitive word, it is the first time that a member of the government has made any declaration. During this silence the newspapers have been left to formulate their own opinions, without either moderation or enlightenment from official sources, and they have been constantly discouraged by the strangeness of this reserve. They have finally, and in desperation, published anything and everything in order to elicit at least correction; but the government has steadily refused to direct public opinion. This has been its greatest weakness. It is possible that the official world itself will now be influenced by the publication of fictitious and exaggerated statements, which have all that disproportion of judgment which comes from editorial offices. The more the journalists have felt the reserve of the politicians, the more their irritation has grown. They have excited the country at large and given its enthusiasm the dangerous note of infatuation. From a troublesome neighbour Russia has been changed by the newspaper men into an ogre.

It is announced each morning that Russia will be easier to conquer than China; and since Japan has never had the salutary experience of misfortune, since a wave of Cossacks sweeping from the North to the South has never given another turn to the opinion of the populace, this statement has been half credited. If war is definitely announced to-night, the triumph of the journalists will be complete. They have done everything possible to render it inevitable.

Last December the two Chambers had an existence of only five minutes before their dissolution,

and it is therefore only to the press representatives that the Minister will read his declaration. The diplomatic corps has in the course of the day been apprised of the contents of this declaration. It is understood that since the 6th oral negotiations with Baron de Rosen have ceased. For the last two days reservists from the country at large have poured into Tokyo. The coolies are erecting temporary shelters for horses along the length of the canals. There is a general belief that action is imminent.

At half-past nine I met one of the staff of the *Yomiuri*, who told me that though nothing was certain the rupture of negotiations had been announced, and hurried on to prepare his article.

9th February. The papers have published the declaration of the Ministry; and at a stroke we have learned the result of the negotiations and in what they have consisted. On the 12th of last August, Japan claimed a quasi-protectorate in Corea, with an engagement to respect commercial freedom; this also involved the recognition by Russia of Chinese sovereignty and commercial freedom in Manchuria. On the 3rd of October, Russia refused to assume alone any engagement regarding Manchuria and demanded that Japan should undertake not to use Corea for any strategic purposes. Her requirements included the establishment of a neutral zone in the north of Corea and a recognition by Japan that Manchuria was beyond the sphere of her interests. This was, in a word, the proposition known as Manchuria against Corea. Japan categorically refused it, calculating that a half-Japanese Corea would be menaced by a Manchuria completely Russian. At this point negotiations were suspended, and they have now been broken off. Japan,

concludes the declaration, "has abandoned all hope of reconciliation."

It is undeniable that it is difficult to see either an imperative or urgent reason for war. Nor does the situation contain a serious threat against the security of Japan or even against the probable development of her ambitions. What is definite is that Japan fears, even if she is given a complete liberty in Korea, that she may be preceded there by Russians, and that she would in consequence be unable to absorb it as quickly as they. The Japanese enterprise in Korea is insignificant in comparison with the Russian enterprise in Manchuria. This is the stimulative point of action. Japan has until now been little of a colonist and has only a meagre power of expansion. She wishes to change this state of things by force, and the basic motive of the war is that she believes this occasion to be favourable. She has imposed on herself heavy sacrifices to obtain an army and navy of the first rank, and is eager to profit by this advantage. The sensibility of the nation has, above all, been wounded by the form of the negotiations and by the indolence of Russia in replying. This was a false step which the Russians should have avoided in dealing with the proudest and most sensitive of peoples.

Though the government makes no categorical announcement, no one is deceived as to its intentions. The newspapers assume the accent and attitude of stirring days; some exaggerate the tone of their arguments and others exalt the lyric quality of their patriotism.

The *Asabi*, the journal of business men, defines the principal cause of war as the competition of the Russians and the Japanese in Manchuria. To quote

its article: "If Russia had definitively occupied Manchuria, Japan would have been deprived of a territory suitable to receive the surplus of her population and which would have offered them admirable means to sustain life. We should have been continually subjected to an artificial compression and our fifty millions of compatriots would have been reduced to the shameful necessity of remaining confined to this small group of islands, which can neither produce sufficient subsistence to nourish them nor furnish them with enough space for free elbow-room." The exaggeration of this is evident. Of the fifty million Japanese of which the *Asahi* speaks, a hundred and thirty thousand alone reside in foreign countries, half of this number in the Hawaiian Islands. The Japanese is one of the least emigrant of nations. In spite of the density of its population Japan is not overcrowded, and in all the northern portion of the country there is ample space.

The *Fiji*, an anglophile sheet, subscribes, with apparent innocence, to the English prejudices against Russia. It avers that Japan will be fighting for civilization and insists on the enthusiastic reception of this idea. "Supposing that by the grace of heaven we emerge victorious from this difficult struggle, we shall not only be in a condition to fulfil our solemn duty, which is to carry the light of civilization into the Far East, but we shall also impose upon the world at large the necessity of respecting us and we shall deserve, in the history of the progress of humanity, a glorious chapter." One admires an eloquence so separate from lower interests; but the *Fiji* concludes, more frankly: "If she is fated to find a Trafalgar or a Waterloo in

the Far East, Japan can aspire to be the England of the Eastern world." The formula has been stated : Japan hopes for a Trafalgar.

Another paper reproaches the Russians, above all else, with their delays and with their offensive negligence. "So outrageous a treatment is contrary to those rules of justice which Japan has observed since the most remote centuries." The note of comment here is simpler and fairer. One hears the echo of the Samurai who, stirred by a slight failure of behaviour, makes out his vengeance a sacred duty. The fact that the Russians have broken the ancient code of courtesy seems to this people to be their gravest provocation.

So far as the aspect of the streets goes—or rather of the roads—it is necessary to remember, in order to estimate the public manifestations, that Tokyo is an immense village, stretching widely about the moat of a huge palace. It is a village of two million inhabitants, most of whom live at the mercy of the free wind. The greater number of the houses, which are low and open, resemble those of small settlements. The different quarters are called "hamlets." These "hamlets" are grouped on hill-sides, among the trees, in the depth of valleys, in the open plain, on the banks of the river and of the various canals; others are clustered in an ancient park of the daimyo and still others about an old temple. The form of life is almost rural. The roads, which are without paving of any sort, run along the flowering hedges, through the groves of bamboo and under the awnings in front of the shops. Even the few official buildings, in the vague circumference about the palace, scarcely combine to give the impression of a city such as the Western

eye is accustomed to see. One finds at times a street which is more compact in its animation, and where tea-houses and the wares of book-shops and print-sellers are crowded together. From the south to the north runs the high road lined with the kiosks where newspapers are sold and with the modern bazaars. In this vast unorganized village it is not easy to observe any direct manifestation of public opinion or activity. The people pursue desultorily their small errands. The gogai are already in circulation, that is to say, sheets of the most recent news, printed as an "extra" on tiny squares of paper. These are carried from hamlet to hamlet, to the sound of a bell; but the vendors do not hurry, and there is no haste to seize the gogai from them.

The reservists are gathered before the shops to allow their uniforms, which they still wear with an air of awkwardness, to be admired. They carry their Japanese clothes in a bundle and seem a little flustered to be in trousers. The people press around, to compliment them and make them little gifts, and there is a general atmosphere of good-will and laughter.

The country people have led in their horses, miserable, knock-kneed, hairy beasts, which are none the less treasured by their owners. The State ordinarily pays from 60 to 120 yen for them, but on this occasion it is understood that they shall be worth only from 20 to 30 yen. A poor North-countryman has offered for no compensation an excellent horse, equipped for mountain climbing, and has led him in, carrying the animal's feed himself.

The bazaars are already offering a print of the

expected naval victory, by Gakko, the first in his trade. They also have for sale large maps, where Corea appears coloured in the same tint as Japan.

A society has been formed for the purpose of composing such poems as will amuse the soldiers and stimulate their ardour.

At the South Station refugees from Vladivostok have begun to arrive. They are for the most part coolies and girls of the poorer class, who are full of such stories as that the Russians tried to detain some of the Japanese women, and of their indignant protests, in the manner of the heroines of Maupassant. It appears that almost all the Russian babies there had Japanese nurses, so these little creatures are the first victims of the war.

At five o'clock there is a gogai : two Russian ships are blocked by a Japanese squadron at Tchemulpo. The news is entitled "Caught in the neck of a bottle," with an evident reminiscence of Santiago di Cuba.

At ten in the evening the little bells ring out the arrival of graver tidings. Three Russian ships have been torpedoed at Port Arthur and there is a general engagement.

10th February. The official despatch from Tchemulpo reads that after a fruitless attempt at escape, and after Admiral Uryu's warning that they were violating the neutrality of the port, the *Varyag* and the *Koreets* brought on themselves their own destruction. The despatch does not publish the number of Japanese war-ships engaged, which would scarcely be flattering to Japanese pride.

The news from Port Arthur is confirmed, but the outcome of the battle is not yet known.

The Europeans here are indignant at this sudden



aggression on the part of Japan, without a declaration of war and in neutral waters. I have been to see a retired Japanese general, to ask his opinion in the matter, and he surprised me by the following question :

“And what is your opinion of these Russian officers who do not die on their decks? And of the petty officers who go pleading to the consulates that they should not be made prisoners? Japanese would never have done that. In the accident to the *Takaimaru*, some months ago, the captain had himself lashed to the main-mast and sank with his boat. She was only a trading-vessel. At the battle of Yalou, the Chinese admiral knew how to die on board. I can assure you that if, by misfortune, a Japanese war-ship were destroyed in this war, not a sailor would wish to save himself.”

I replied, with some astonishment, that it was difficult to see why the suicide of the Russian sailors should have been deemed necessary, and that the Russian commandant had fulfilled his duty categorically. But the general did not enter into this distinction. I could feel in him the old Japanese code of suicide: “to have a trust, to fail in its discharge, nothing remains but harakiri.”

I ventured another question: would he not regard Corea as neutral territory?

“Not in the least. We do not admit this pretension of neutrality. The war with China bequeathed to us the right to Corean territory for the passage of our troops.”

“Is it, then, in conformity with the spirit of the Samurai to attack Russia without warning?”

“And why not?”

His tone recalled the fact that in the histories of

heroism which one sees on the Japanese stage, cunning and sudden attack are raised to an equal glory with suicide. Whether one kills or dies, the facts and the terms are equally unimportant. One is suddenly aware, in the tests of war, of certain radical moral divergences between Oriental and Occidental. We have not the same definition of the noble and the ignoble.

As I passed along the principal street I found the print by Gakko for sale everywhere, together with some old photographs of the battle of Yalou. The gogai are issued on each other's heels; but there is still no statement of the result of the Port Arthur engagement. The crowd showed neither anxiety nor turbulence. Some street urchins had dragged a Russian flag in a brook and heaped pebbles upon it, but the people seemed as calm and as smilingly polite as usual. One wonders whether it is their habitual sense of deportment or an absolute confidence in victory.

In the Kanda district several barbers have hung out a sign that soldiers will be shaved at half-price. The half-tariff applies also in the public baths. A midwife advertises her services as free to the wives of soldiers who have left for the war. A small ovation was being given to a soldier of enormous stature. It appears that men of this size have framed a petition that they be sent to the front in a single company. Each of them is able to do the work of three coolies and can give the lie to whoever sneers at the miniature size of the Japanese. A more touching petition is that of the prisoners who are nearing the expiration of their terms. Since they are not eligible as soldiers, they beg to be admitted to the lower ranks of the police. It gives a sense of

the unanimity of the country that, the moment there is a patriotic necessity, the thieves should offer to do police work.

A manifestation was organized by the *Fiji* for this evening. Several hundred students met in the new park of Hibiya, carrying red and white paper lanterns and the national flag. The constables respectfully asked them to maintain order; they, too, carried the regulation red and white lantern, for in this unlit village the police do the service of public lighting. The students marched in good order to the outer gate of the palace; they were followed by a few girl scholars, walking on their high clogs and seeming somewhat embarrassed and shy in the crowd. Before the closed gates there were shouts of "Banzai! banzai!" and the procession then wound off to repeat the ceremony in the enclosure of the Admiralty. They parted at last with many salutations, the lanterns separated like fire-flies in the immensity of the night, and peace dropped on the city; the moon whitened the silent roads like hoar-frost, and gave it the fantastic contours and values of Chinese ink; and the black sky was powdered with the silver of an aventurine lacquer.

*11th February.* Last night the Emperor made a public declaration of war; from the point of view of the Russians, who have been informed by such definite acts, it must seem somewhat tardy.

The moment is scarcely a well-chosen one for the citation of Russian brutalities; the *Fiji* none the less says: "It is entirely in the nature of things that the Russians should provoke to the utmost, by their inhuman actions, the magnanimity of our officers and our men. But we may be confident that the

Japanese will control themselves and will do nothing contrary to the universally recognized laws of civilization and of humanity. While the enemy, stripped of his varnish of civilization, will show himself in all his naked barbarity, the moderation and humanity of our men will elicit, as a contrast, the sympathy of the civilized world."

The *Kokumin*, a semi-official sheet, predicts a long war. "We have not yet fought on land, and we should not underestimate the enemy before the exchange of some vital strokes. The comment of certain Russians should serve us as a warning; they admit the superiority of Japan at every point except one—the capacity for endurance. We must of necessity contradict this estimate, and we must summon all our powers of firmness and of perseverance."

The *Asahi* believes the day to be far distant when Russia shall sue for peace. "The fact that she hesitates to publish her defeat at Port Arthur proves the obstinacy of her resolution." It is ironic that so little does Russia hesitate to "publish her defeat" that it is through the Alexeieff report, sent back from Paris by M. Motono, that Japan has to-day learned the details of her success.

To-day is a national fête: the anniversary of the foundation of the Empire, at the time of Romulus, by Jimmu Tenno, great-grandson of the Sun. There is a great display of flags—fewer, however, than on New Year's Day. The Emperor gives a breakfast to the various diplomats, after which he is to receive the guardians of the sacred treasures. These treasures, the possession of which designates the Emperor, are: the mirror of the goddess, Sun, the sabre of the god, Typhon, and a sacred jewel.

The day is further celebrated by a performance of the *Nô*: five lyric dramas with chorus, orchestra and dances.

I strolled into the theatre, to gossip about Japanese matters with a friend. The public is extraordinarily calm. The *gogai* are not distributed, and no one seems to attach any importance to them. There is no atmosphere of war; for that matter, there is none throughout Tokyo, except in the barracks and in the newspaper offices.

They were playing *Sumidagawa*, one of the most celebrated of the *Nô*. A woman, who carries the reed which indicates madness, learns from a boatman that the child she is seeking was drowned, some years since. The songs, the orchestra, and the lines of the poem unite in the expression of this sorrow. The movement of river waves, the rustle of bamboos and the stir of the wind murmur in concert the prayer of the dead to Amida. By degrees the strident and plaintive music grows vaster; the mother hears through it the voice of her child invoking Amida. The child suddenly appears to her, with the terrifying hair of a spirit; twice she tries to embrace it and twice it melts from her grasp and disappears.

The story is profoundly impressive, and the people around were moved to the point of tears. Their openness to artistic impression is unfailing; it is difficult to realize that their sons and brothers are at this moment on the high seas, fighting a great battle.

Baron de Rosen, the Russian Minister, has left. He was fated to learn here the reverses which have come to his country. He has been surrounded with sympathy; the Court and the various Ministers

have sent representatives to take leave of him, and all the foreign Ministers were present at his departure, except those of Corea and China. The Empress gave Madame de Rosen some magnificent gold and silver lacquers.

The newspapers have joined in this manifestation of sympathy. "Baron de Rosen," says the *Kokumin*, "is one of Japan's best friends and one who has most intimately comprehended us. He has served his government with an impeccable devotion and loyalty and he has always shown us his good-will. The Japanese preserve intact their friendly sentiments for the Court of Russia and its representative, and they wish nothing better than that Baron de Rosen should shortly find himself here again."

"It was beyond Baron de Rosen's power," says the *Asahi*, "to prevent the present crisis; indeed, it was also beyond the power of the Tsar. We have the highest personal regard and respect for Baron de Rosen and for his master, the Tsar, both of whom are above any prejudice of hostility of race or of religion. Let us hope that, in fighting with equal devotion to their relative causes and as honourable enemies, the two belligerents will not lose their old sense of personal esteem; let us trust that they can deal with each other like two friends placed in a temporarily false position."

At this hour, and fugitive as it may be, one has the tragic impression of a war at the base of which lies no hatred.

Almost all the Russians have left with Baron de Rosen; there was a sad leave-taking at the station between the Minister and the orthodox bishop of Tokyo, Monsignor Nicolai. Baron de Rosen urged him to accompany them, but the bishop could not

be prevailed upon to do so. His life work has been here, and he has remained in his cathedral with the golden minarets, surrounded by the twenty-five thousand Japanese Christians who owe their conversion almost solely to his ardour.

The French Minister, M. Harmand, is charged with the protection of the remaining Russians, and M. André, the first interpreter, will live in the Russian Legation.

*12th February.* The Bank of Japan is about to issue a war loan of a hundred million yen. It has only a hundred million of gold in reserve. M. Sonoda, one of the best speakers in Japan, has begun a campaign through the country to prevent a deterioration of value in the yen. He is urging his compatriots to deposit all their gold and silver objects in the Bank of Japan, in order to assure the currency of paper money. The cost of the war falls most heavily upon the poorer classes; the rich, on their part, are contributing their most priceless possessions. These are in many cases treasures inherited from generations of ancestors; in the Japanese view their beauty is only enhanced by the sacrifice of them to patriotic necessity.

The geisha have been the first to respond to this appeal: they have brought their jewels, and sometimes even the watch-chains of their friends.

The Japanese are generally supposed to have little dependence on the forms of their belief; but it is none the less evident that they are anxious to know if the gods are favourable to them. In the first days of the war with China, a bird of prey which had lit for a moment on the main-mast of the *Takachiho* was captured. It was a fortunate presage, for the *Takachiho* was the first to sink a

Chinese boat. This time the same ship, according to report, has cut a young whale in two. The augurs claim that this foretells the definite separation of the Russian fleet into two impotent masses. The daily despatches give news of other forecasts. While a man of Bitchu was smoking his pipe, he saw an eagle fall from the sky; this, to the popular mind, symbolizes the Russian eagle. In Chikuzen, at the temple of Hachimantaro, the *Kokumin* announces that while the priests were praying for Japan, the sacred pigeons, to the number of seven hundred, flew out to the north-west and disappeared. It is cited that in 1894, just before the battle of Yalou, the birds took flight in the same manner and only returned after the Japanese victory.

One gathers, from the space which these reports occupy in the papers, that the public mind is far from indifferent to them. Before he received his appointment as admiral from the Emperor, Togo had been chosen by popular acclaim because he had fired the first cannon shot in the war with China.

Marquis Ito was to-day sent to the sanctuaries of Ise, to make a solemn petition to the gods. He penetrated to the depths of the sacred forest and, in the little wooden temple, where since the origin of things the mirror of the goddess, Sun, has rested, and before the light silk veil which no one may raise, he read the great invocation. This is the ceremony which marks the days of national peril. It has been fulfilled at strangely variant moments—at the time of the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, and in the nineteenth on the arrival of the Americans and Europeans.

The populace has learned with satisfaction that the Tsar has not gone to Moscow to offer his prayers ;



they are in any case convinced that the kami of Moscow is not as puissant as Amaterasu.

A second envoy was sent by the Emperor to announce the declaration of war to the ancestral Manes. He declaimed his message in loud tones, at Kudan, in the temple sacred to those soldiers who have died for their country, and called the dead to witness that the cause for which others were about to die was just.

*13th February.* Rumour has to-day signalled the presence of a Russian squadron in northern Japanese waters. First Fukuyama and then Aminato were reported bombarded; but all this stir was reduced to the fact that a merchant vessel, the *Nakanoura*, was sunk by the Russians.

The newspapers have treated with contumely the atrocity of sinking an inoffensive boat, with her crew, instead of capturing it. "Russia will pay," says the *Fiji*, "sooner or later, for this capricious destruction. We merely draw the attention of more civilized strangers to this crime, which is contrary to the rules of war, and to the principles of humanity." "An act of pure piracy," says the *Nichi-Nichi*. "The Russians have proved themselves complete barbarians," the *Asahi* states. "They are the Goths and Vandals of the North, insensible to shame and defiant of heaven." The *Kokumin* remarks: "Our conduct in regard to Russian merchant vessels has been entirely different. We have refrained from inflicting the smallest injury on the sailors; indeed, they have been surprised at our generosity. In regard to the prisoners of war taken at Tchemulpo we have been more than generous. We left them free to depart; more—we allowed seventy-eight of them to enlist

in the volunteer corps for the care of the wounded which was organized by our compatriots of Tchemulpo. And Russia repays us with these acts of horror. But Japan will none the less absolutely spurn any idea of reprisals. She would disdain to subject non-combatants to such shameful treatment."

The Europeans here are, generally speaking, united in their condemnation of this scarcely gallant operation of war.

Togo is the name on all lips, and a legend is fast crystallizing around it. "Togo"—a Japanese friend told me—"is completely a hero. You remember what he did during the war with China? He fired on his own men! The Japanese admiral was hesitating and the Chinese frankly did not want to fight. Togo fired—and every one believed it to be the Chinese, and the battle was on." Every one cites Togo's remarks. His appointment as admiral was brought to him when he was ill in bed. He instantly rose. "As soon as my foot touches deck, I shall be cured." When the fleet sailed, a friend asked what message he should convey to the admiral's wife. "Nothing, except that I forbid her to send me any news of herself." An attitude sufficiently Roman, but scarcely to Occidental taste. In his first battle, when he was told how badly the enemy ships were damaged, his laconic comment was: "We will mend them."

There is instanced a different kind of Roman streak in another Japanese. Just as he left for the war he divorced his wife. It is a matter easily accomplished here; but he was recently married and the couple had been extremely devoted. His sole reason for the action was that as he had neither

father nor mother, brother nor sister, he wished to dedicate himself entirely to the service of his country; and he did not expect to return from the war alive. His will bequeathed everything to the State. The wife submitted without flinching; one wonders which of the two made the more vital sacrifice.

*14th February; Sunday.* To-day I have been to the Greek church. The Russian Cathedral is by far the largest Christian church in Tokyo, and it dominates several quarters of the city. If Tokyo were not so many worlds from Paris, one could compare its position to that of the Sacré-Cœur. It stands as a mute witness of the tolerance of the Japanese and the energy of a single individual.

To my rickshaw man it is only necessary to say "Nicolai," in order to have him understand my destination. The Russian church and the Russian faith are equally called by this name in Tokyo. In twenty-three years the bishop, Nicolai, who has never been able to accustom himself to the co-operation of any Russian auxiliary, has created the entire colony of churches, pastors and flocks. He has converted by his own personal effort more than all the united Catholic missionaries, and he had not the advantage of building, as they did, on the foundations laid amongst the old Christians of Nagasaki. His proselytism has taken place against the grain of the most unfavourable conditions, for the inimical attitude of the Japanese to the Russians is a rooted one.

In the enclosure of the iconostasis I could not discern the white beard of the bishop. A Japanese pope was officiating, in his heavy cope. One or two hundred Japanese, men and women, were

grouped about, all the rigidity of their silence seeming to hang on the priest and the flaming icons.

I heard that yesterday Nicolai called together the most prominent amongst his parishioners. His statement to them was the essence of simplicity. He had been unable to decide, he said, to separate himself from them and he would leave Japan only at their own desire. But he was a subject of the Tsar, and he would pray as faithfully for his Emperor as they would pray for the Japanese country. If they had news of a Japanese victory, it would be only fitting—since God required of them both patriotism and loyalty—that they should celebrate their thanksgiving in their church. He left the issue to a just Heaven, which would judge the cause and permit those who deserved it to conquer.

There must have been a strange contradiction in the thoughts of this gathering, and they must have had a latent sense of the contradiction in a war which opposed their spiritual chief to their legitimate ruler, the thousand-year-old incarnation of their country to the man who represents for them the vicar of Christ. One's thoughts travelled to the other little Christian communities, of diverse names, scattered throughout Japan. It makes the situation more touching that the converts have still all the first warmth of the apostolic fervour; they have not yet hardened themselves to the habit of invoking Sabaoth and singing *Te Deum* after a massacre.

The Japanese have claimed the faculty to transform and refine whatever they borrow from other races. They have made of Buddhism, and particularly of the Zen sect, a religion of happiness and activity and of an equable attitude of soul, and they have recognized and nourished in Confucianism a

doctrine of spiritual honour as sensitive as the Castilian. One wonders what their quick artisan-ship will make of Christianity, which as far back as the sixteenth century inspired in them a new thirst for social justice and a fierce desire for martyrdom.

There appeared to-day, in an English paper, some reflections on the war by M. Uchimura, a Japanese Christian. He cannot reconcile himself to the fact that nations which call themselves Christian should not treat each other as they themselves would be treated, and he attributes to this falsity of individualistic pride the unapproachable attitude of Russia pending the negotiations. The war, he says, cannot terminate without Christians recognizing that a single law exists for humanity at large, that respect is due to man as man, and that it is a fundamental failure to ignore this precept. He attributes the outbreak of the conflict to the false patriotism of both Russians and Japanese. "Are the Russian and Japanese Chauvinists alone responsible? Certainly not. There are English, American and French Chauvinists, who, detecting advantages to themselves in a quarrel, are only too glad to see two neighbouring peoples leap at each other's throats. What they term their sympathy for Japan or their sympathy for Russia is in reality only the product of their egoism, and the ineffaceable stigma of their religion. There is nothing more worthy of contumely than such patriots who name themselves Christians and who, to secure an open market for their produce, encourage other nations to resort to arms."

For his own part, he frankly deplores the war. He cites in a favourable sense the French proverb: "Scratch the Russian and you will find a Tartar." "Are not Russians half-Oriental, and are not

Japanese half-Occidental? Are their respective missions in Asia not complementary rather than contradictory? Have peoples destined to a high collaboration the right to make war on each other? Nothing is of a more frequent occurrence than friction between brothers and friends; the present conflict is an additional instance, and we can only pray that such a deplorable misunderstanding will be shortly terminated."

In countless ways one can trace, in this country, the germs of a reconciliation with Russia.

*15th February.* The actor Kawakami, well known by Parisians as the Antoine of Japan, and the husband of Sada Yakko, has gone to the front with all his troupe and with Sada Yakko herself; not as a soldier, but as an artist who wishes to make certain studies from nature. They are going to witness a drama which they themselves will reproduce later. Meanwhile, they will act their heroic plays for the soldiers and will install in the front lines their mirrors and their rouge-pots.

The time is opportune for the infusion of a new life into theatric art. A theatre at Yokohama has already announced a performance of "The Battle of Port Arthur." The play had been written before the action; one feels as if this were imagination pushed too far.

Since his disillusion in the political world, Kawakami has devoted himself to the reform of the heroic theatre. In the future this will necessarily also be the realistic theatre. Last year the troupe played "Othello," with Othello as a Japanese officer and the scene set in Formosa.

A pickpocket slipped amongst those of his compatriots who entertained Kawakami at Osaka and

stole the actor's watch. It appears that this was a present made to him by the Tsar, during his Russian tour. Kawakami announced this fact to the press and that he was glad to be relieved of such a souvenir. The people of Osaka state that the following day a small parcel was left at the actor's house and that the thief, having seen the imperial crest on the watch, returned it with contempt.

The reality of the war is now perceptible. At every step one meets the little carts which serve as furniture-vans. Two or three coverings, a tiny wardrobe, a lamp, a brazier, a clock; this is all. Japanese life is lived without furniture. Once the head of the household is gone, his family looks for a more modest dwelling-place. I fell into talk with a woman. She carried a baby on her back and led two little girls by the hand; and on the shoulders of the older another little head nodded. She and her husband, who is a maker of tiles, had gone as colonists to the Hokkaido. They met with poor luck, and returned to Tokyo; now that her husband is summoned to the ranks, the woman scarcely knows how to live. Some one has been found to take charge of her mother-in-law. She herself plans to get her bread by making match-boxes, and the old woman will earn a pittance by playing the guitar in the streets. There seems to be no pressure of anxiety in their minds; indeed, the solidarity of the poorer people is one of the most impressive traits of Japanese life. In all quarters of the city there have been formed societies to care for the families of soldiers. The subscriptions to some of these already amount to four or five million yen. Ten yen are paid to a family for its installation in a new home, and in addition four yen for each person above fifteen

and two yen for each child ; and in addition to this there is a service of constant kindness and politeness.

The patriotism of the poorest is the most fervent of all. I saw an old woman bring into the cabin which serves as a police station two hundred yen as an offering to the government. She explained to the sergeant that this represented her savings for her old age, but that her days of infirmity were not worth so much consideration. Economy, too, can scarcely be said to be one of the Japanese virtues. It is astonishing that malefactors, with no apparent possessions, can give a hundred yen. A special office to receive these contributions has been opened at the War Office. More than two millions have already been deposited there, in great part in donations from the very poor. Those who have no money bring their mattresses and all they possess for the use of the military. Others have only their services to give. The rickshaw men carry the soldiers without charge ; the men and women workers in a great oil refinery have united in the decision to work an additional hour each day and to give the extra pay they receive to the State. The most striking fact of all is the simplicity and inevitability with which every Japanese fulfils his conception of duty.

Strangers arouse little resentment ; at Kobe, one hears, there is some hostility to the foreigner, but here there is definitely apparent an attitude of kindness. The foreigners, on their side, have contributed to the various war works, and some have offered to lodge soldiers. An obscure community of sentiment has arisen as a result of the stir of the times. Japanese life and thought have a social intimacy which are conducive to such sympathy



and there is no country where opinion and enthusiasm blend more freely.

Two typical personages fill the pages of the popular gazette : a hero of the war with China and a Russian spy. The first is famous for having dynamited a fort or saved a gun. He is to-day in the territorials, and he fills the recruiting offices with his clamorous advice to the enlisted men to insist that they shall be sent to the front at once. In view of his popularity, the administration has to appease his ardour with promises of immediate action ; and while he waits for his orders, his friends offer him sake and listen once again to the tale of his exploits. The Russian spy is a Japanese of unprepossessing demeanour ; whenever the suspicions concerning him take precise form, he is expelled from his quarter of the town and his neighbours take upon themselves the maintenance of his family.

*16th February.* We have heard that on the night of the 14th two Japanese torpedo boats, in a whirlwind of snow, penetrated to the entrance to Port Arthur. They torpedoed two vessels, were discovered, made good their escape, and came back safe and whole.

This kind of audacity is sympathetic to the Japanese temperament. They are proud to cite the fact that the captain who commanded the principal torpedo boat is already famous for his taciturnity and his temerity. On the 8th of February he reconnoitred the waters at Dalny, to search out the Russian fleet, and sailed up almost to the edge of the quay.

The Emperor has set the note of sacrifice for the greatest families in the kingdom by depositing in

the Bank of Japan his collection of coins and medals. He is leaving Tokyo and will take up his residence at Kyoto—"To change the action of spirits," as a Japanese said to me. This is a recognition of the subtle mystic ritual which this people so closely observes. Like the families of his soldiers, the Emperor will reduce his style of living and disavow all luxury. During the war with China he lived in a cottage at Hiroshima.

He will have no part in tactical operations or in the direction of his armies. He is essentially a statesman, whose eminent qualities are discretion, tact and good sense, and he is entirely willing that his subjects should freely question his capacities as a commander. At the last manœuvres, an official report frankly criticized those operations which he conducted.

*17th February.* The annual festival of the fall of the first snow. During the night the flakes were heavy and thick, but they are dissolving before the power of a brilliant sun. The popular mind sees in this an image of the dissolution of white Russia's strength before the flag with the red orb. From the heights of Atagoyama, crowds have been watching the fragile grace of the country shining under its white veils; the more fortunate have chanced to surprise the miracle of February—a flowering plum branch beneath the snow, or a nightingale stirring into flight with the tip of its wing a flake as perfect as a petal.

*18th February.* The popular journals publish daily caricatures which can scarcely be called artistic. Japan has no longer a Kyosai. Some of the drawings are alive, however, with the vivid Japanese spirit.

The yose are the little public rooms where people gather, each evening, to sit about on mats, sip their tea, and listen to the most popular reciters. The speaker kneels on a raised platform. He makes at the outset his profound salutation, crouched like a frog and leaning on his outspread palms. The movement of the tale he tells flows to the ceaseless movement of his fan. There are both serious and comic speakers, but all have an admirable art of mimicry. They weave for the audience a fabric of brilliant diversity, history flavoured with tart personalities, old tales, romances whose rich redundancies spread over the course of several evenings, accounts of travel accented with the oddity of burlesque, stories full of a sly suggestiveness or of the gaiety of impossible exaggeration, and embroideries of comment on the happenings of the day.

To-night the Amanosetsu who fought in the war with China told with an easy art an episode of that war. At the end of the silence which followed his final bow he announced, in another tone, that he was about to leave for the present front, in order to bring back impressions of it to his faithful public. There was a flattering murmur and one foresaw that the laurels of Kawakami would be divided.

*19th February.* The sailors of the English and Italian warships which have just arrived have had the most cordial of receptions. For the first time I saw Tokyo swayed by a popular demonstration. One's thoughts went back to a reception of Russian sailors in Paris, eleven years ago; except that, since the kiss is unknown as a salutation in Japan, the mousmés did not show the same gaiety of enthusiasm as the French girls did in greeting the sailors. The Japanese people are at one of those periods of crisis

where they feel the need to express affection. Every stranger was hailed with the cry of "Banzai ! banzai !" and all were taken for English or Italians indiscriminately. The smallest shopkeeper has hung out his flags in their honour.

An essentially Japanese spectacle was arranged for the visitors in the park of Hibiya. This was a wrestling match, of no ordinary character. The champions of the East and the West, Hitachi-Yama and Megatani, gave such an exhibition as one ordinarily sees only once a year. They looked more than ever monstrous, as they stood naked side by side, and seemed more than ever an enigma amongst the delicate Japanese. Megatani was a mountain of reddish flesh, with a face scarcely human ; Hitachi-Yama, hardly less inhuman, his skin blotched and his eyes bloodshot. Before the match they stood tensely bowed over each other, in a motionless salute, and when, at the signal, the gigantic strain of effort began, their breath came with sharp sound of whistles. Megatani, by his actual immensity of weight, conquered his adversary ; and one felt that the sailor lads crouched in the front lines had taken away with them a singularly brutal vision of so fine a race.

In the splendid evening sky there are flashing the fireworks which, as they burst into stars, scatter on Tokyo the flags of three nations. The crowd is so closely packed that it flows with the smooth movement of water. When a petard falls in its midst, the people neither flinch nor cry out, and the smoke of the powder rises harmlessly above their heads. This mastery of the nerves, at even the unimportant moments, stands out as an essential quality of the Japanese.

20th February. The Emperor has received the first trophy—a Russian flag from the *Varyag*, captured at Tchemulpo, and the fruit of a scarcely glorious action. It has been given to the Military Museum, and to-day it is hung at the great door, in view of all the city. The crowd passes, as serious and as perfect in deportment as usual, in spite of its ardour. Every one pauses to read the inscription and to comment politely, wanders for a moment into the park, and then gravely returns to admire the blue cross of St. Andrew on a white ground and the holes torn by the explosion of the *Varyag*.

In the park itself, and beneath the cherry-trees where the idle divert themselves, the air has already the melodious suavity of spring. The vendors are peddling their tempting delicacies—tiny cakes moulded by hand and sea-weeds of all colours, clinging to scraps of rock. Every now and then a man approaches the temple sacred to the memory of fallen soldiers and bends his head in a brief prayer. Here and there is the bright red of the imperial guard, which has imitated the French red trousers. On the platform reserved for women who have taken religious vows, a priest dressed in white is striking, in a grotesque rhythm, a painted drum, to the delight of an audience of children. A sense of the perpetual exclusion of the foreigner comes over one once more: is this a vulgarized liturgy, or a cheap show raised to the rank of a ritual?

21st February. There is a story current that at Tchemulpo a Japanese torpedo boat has been penetrated by shot; but no paper mentions it. It appears that the funnel was pierced and that during the night the Japanese sawed it off.

22nd February. M. Inoue Tetsujiro, the doyen

of the Faculty of Letters, is at once a scientist, a philosopher and the founder of a new form of religion. He has studied in Paris with Jules Simon, Vacherot, Caro, Ravaisson and Paul Janet. He is no less conversant with the minds of contemporary philosophers in Germany, England and the United States, and in this country which is in reality a vast library he is noted as the man whose reading has been the most extensive and the most diverse. One would define him as one of the authorized exponents of Japanese thought. Against the walls of the vast room where he received me there were piled stacks of thin Japanese volumes, and ranged amongst them the heavy bindings of the West. The chief furnishing of the room was a long table on trestles, and the air was full of the charm of the austerity of erudition. In spite of his doctoral frock coat, M. Inoue is as instinct with vitality as a hawk. He was entirely willing to talk of the war. It would be, he averred, a great moral lesson, and first of all for Russia. Russia had violated a solemn pact to which she had freely consented. She would have to learn, and to her cost, that good faith is obligatory even in dealing with the nations of Far Asia.

I ventured to suggest that this seemed scarcely to dispose of the present instance. But he took me up:

"But this is an instance of international morality. If a contract is violated to the hurt of one race, it is violated to the hurt of all. This war may have superficial causes of superficial interests, but it is based on a clear case of justice and injustice. Japan has it keenly on her conscience that she is protecting international right. For us, too, the war will be a lesson in political morality. If we are victorious, as we hope, it will be because of the vital force of

our liberal institutions. We owe more to the propulsive power of their ideas than to our armies. The thesis of the military order defends, as a rule, an absolutism of power ; we know, on the contrary, that only a principle of liberty can create the conscious unanimity of a nation. Because our opinions circulate as freely as air, we have no internal revolt to fear. In 1894 the Chinese Minister informed his government that, since Japan was torn by parliamentary dissensions, it was the propitious moment for an attack. The futility of his conclusion was proven. The spirit of the entire country rose in a flame such as even our ancient shoguns never saw. To-day it is the same. Thanks to our recognition of liberty—and eliminating a very restricted group of neo-Christians and socialists—the same unanimity exists at present. Liberty is with us”—M. Inoue made the allusion to the “Marseillaise” with a smile—“and she will fight with her defenders.”

“But if Japan vanquishes a European power, will she be as likely to wish to draw her inspiration from Europe ? ”

“Unfailingly so. Neither our religions nor our traditional doctrines can throw up a barrier against progress. Our Shintoism is too summary, our Buddhism is fading into superstition, our Confucianism is incompatible with a liberal regime. We do not need Europe’s Christianity, but we do need her scientific methods and the new social ideal which she is elaborating.”

And the professor, arrived at last at his favourite thesis, wandered delightfully into an exposition of the future religion of humanity.

*26th February.* A day of false rumours. An

official Russian despatch announces that four Japanese armoured cruisers and two transports have been destroyed at Port Arthur. I strolled through the principal streets to see the impression which this announcement of disaster had produced. The *gogai*, without commentary, was posted on the shop doors and on the telegraph poles. The passers-by read it with no break in the surface of their habitual serenity, and with their perpetual smile. Is it that they totally lack the sensitiveness of nerves, or that they have a self-confidence which is impregnable?

At eight in the evening there arrived a corrected version of the story. Five transports, in imitation of the *Merrimac* which was sunk to block the Gulf of Santiago, sank themselves, or were sunk, in an attempt to block the approach to Port Arthur, which the Japanese squadron has bombarded. This *gogai* is posted above that of this morning; and, as this morning, the people read it calmly, without any manifest feeling, and with the same eternal quality in their smile.

Seventy-seven men were called for to navigate the ships to be sunk and the torpedo boats charged with the work of rescue. More than two thousand volunteered, and one deliberately cut his finger and wrote the application with his blood.

*27th February.* The benevolent society of my neighbourhood has posted the following notice:

1. This will be the longest war Japan has ever known. It is, therefore, essential that every possible economy shall be practised.

2. No matter how many successive Japanese victories are announced, do not permit yourself any rejoicing. There will be no veritable victory until the war is won.



3. Except for war expenses, deprive yourselves of everything.

4. No houses should be built and there should be no money spent on marriages, funerals or other ceremonies.

5. If a contagious malady should appear, it would require a heavy cost to arrest its progress; it is, therefore, essential that every one shall take the requisite care of his health.

*29th February.* The prints of war subjects are making the shop windows brilliant. About a hundred have already been published. On the tossed violet of waves a burning ship smoulders, and in the long rose streak of its reflection a black torpedo boat slinks away. Another shows a blinding snow, composed of particles of shattered plaster, and a group of blue blouses crowding about a cannon; the faces grimace in their excitement and in the background, in a pale vermillion light, a boat is on fire. The theme of the imaginative treatment of a naval combat is varied in countless ways.

The crowds gather before these prints and examine them in a silence of concentration. The artists fulfil the part of educators. One of the newspapers has complained that the depiction is too flattering to the Japanese, and demands a more realistic respect of truth.

*1st March.* The new war romances have appeared, in their bright bindings. They arrest the eye literally at every step, for there are more bookshops in a Tokyo street than in the length and breadth of Spain. The titles are displayed everywhere: "In the Mists of Tchemulpo," "Let us die for our Country," "The Old Officer," "The Offering to the Dead," "The House of Admiral

Yamanaka." These stories appear in instalments, and the plots will be modified according to the course of events. Some publishers have their correspondents with the armies at the front. One sees the war legend develop, in all the fire and heat of actuality.

*2nd March.* It is the culminating moment of the exquisiteness of the plum-trees. A group of poets and enthusiasts scatters like flowers in the orchards of Kameido. This year the appreciation of the beauty of blossoms and scents is heightened by the pride of civic emotion. The fervent devotees are more numerous, and they tell me that the movable tea equipages have rented twice as dearly as last year.

Wrinkled old men, with wisdom in their seared faces, and floating geishas are seated side by side on the gold-coloured mats. Since all the young men are at the war, the looks of tenderness from the women's dark eyes rise and lose themselves in the clouds. One fancies that this surplus of feeling without direction saturates the delicate air and lingers in the intoxicating spring odour.

In a frame of dark surrounding pines are crouched a knot of bent, worm-eaten plum-trees, shining in their brief radiance. They are broken and blackened, and crutches have been arranged to support their infirmity. But all the length of their old intertwined arms the white flowers ripple, so that the dark branches seem saturated in a sparkling mist. Each tree has its degrees of whiteness, from snow to ivory, and the clinging scent which they breathe out impregnates one's clothes.

Some strange incongruity struck me in a geisha with a magnificent sash: suddenly I realized that

she wore her hair in a European knot, instead of in the high Japanese fashion. The girl with whom she talked and all her neighbours did the same. On inquiry I was told that they had given up their usual head-dress as too costly, and that the economy thus achieved was to go as a subscription to the war fund. There was something peculiarly poignant in this sacrifice of personal beauty for the love of country.

*3rd March.* To-day is a festival consecrated to little girls. The tiny mousmés make a grave effort at sacrifice, since their brothers and their friends are subjected to the dangers of war. They have been instructed not to give way to laughter. Their dolls must wear their last year's dresses, and the contents of their little savings banks will be given to the Society of Nurses.

At the top of three elevations of red lacquer, on a mat bound in silk, are placed images of the Emperor and Empress; a little lower, a prince and a princess, and lower still five musicians. Between them stand some porcelain jars, some plates of sweets and a minute set of furniture. Lanterns, on their slim, tall pedestals, complete the decoration. Two young girls advanced with a slowly measured grace, carrying flowering branches, while the little children, in their sumptuous dresses, fixedly watched them, and I and a Japanese friend, crouched in a corner, discussed the war and heated our fingers over the brazier. Mademoiselle Suzu, the eldest daughter, was directly in front of the little shrine. She made her reverential bow, struck her hands gently together and began her prayer; the altar was so low that she had to kneel, and in the act the whiteness of her bare leg shone underneath her robe.

There is no Japanese family so poor that they have not to-day celebrated, before these clay images, this rite which is immemorial.

*4th March.* All of the theatrical spectacles of Tokyo are based on the war, from those in the important theatres to those in the rough wooden booths where one can see a Russian shot for a penny. My interpreter recommended to me a certain popular theatre where, as he said, the public was as dramatic as the actors. Huddled in our little box, we found ourselves surrounded by voluble patriots, who gorged themselves plentifully, and who, in the intervals of their noisy laughter, gulped down their sake and worked up their enthusiasm to excite the actors. The warmed flagons followed each other in quick succession, as their contents disappeared into the little round cups, and wand-like sticks were used to eat from the lacquer boxes which are full of rice and fried eels.

There is no attempt to present a consecutive story, but rather a review which represents the various daily happenings recorded in the newspapers. I was particularly struck by the fact that the spectacle turned so often on many of those instances of the selective action of conscience which the Japanese so like to discuss, subtle moralists as they are. A publisher recently announced a forthcoming treatise on casuistry, as inspired by the war: he could have gathered many of its elements here.

A Japanese woman of Manchuria, for instance, is supposed to be the "*femme des yeux*," or mekake, of a Russian officer. She explains her case to the audience; the officer has showered on her countless kindnesses, he loves her, she loves him, and he

has every confidence in her. In a bureau of her house there are certain secret maps of the general staff; can she, and should she, steal them? Does patriotism nullify the personal duties? The audience shouts to her its affirmation: she opens the bureau and flees with the maps. In three or four other scenes spying is glorified in this same manner; and I recollected, as I watched them, a woman who was asked, some months since, for news of her son and who responded, with a simplicity of pride: "He is a spy in Manchuria."

Another little human problem was represented by the meeting of two soldiers. The one accuses the other of wearing a torn and soiled shirt; the second retorts that it is good enough to attract a Russian ball. This reply was greeted with applause, but more still follows. The first speaker reminds his friend that after a battle the dead are rifled and that it is the pride of a Japanese soldier to be found with clean linen. At this the enthusiasm was unbounded.

Everyday happenings were pictured, naturally and without ornamentation, without too accentuated an imagination, and with a highly picturesque realism. At the call of the reservists, one saw a pedlar of boiled vegetables receive his marching orders in the street. He dropped the two wooden saws he carried and ran to the barracks, crying, "Banzai!" The prefect of police approached, in his black overcoat and his white gloves, and asked why the saws had been left to obstruct the street; and, when the passers-by explained the matter, he picked them up and walked off balancing them on his shoulder.

In a neighbouring house, a carpenter who was

going off was grieved to leave his wife at the point of childbirth. The neighbours all assured him of their care of her, in his absence; but when the moment of departure struck the woman began to feel the first pains. The wildest confusion was represented; every one ran here and there, seeking for the grandfather, the grandmother and the midwife. The birth of the child was supposed to take place behind a partition of paper. The old grandfather tremulously hurried to bring hot water and the grandmother livened the coals of the fire by blowing on them through a pipe and exhaling the smoke through her nostrils. The detail was as fine as that of a Dutch picture. All the populace of the street is gathered at the door, while the poor husband drags on his uniform and calls out to know if the child is born; and just as he is on the doorstep a cry comes from behind the screen and the grandfather runs out to him with the tiny bundle of pink flesh. There are tears and laughter, and all the audience shouts: "Banzai!"

Another scene showed another street of Tokyo and a lodging-house for soldiers. Here there passed changing pictures of every form of Japanese life. One saw children playing at war; the purveyor of military supplies, who made his rations too scant; the coolie who had brought a soldier in his cart and who refused to accept a fee; the villager leading his horse and whispering in his ear so that he should not shy; the hero of the Civil War, bringing to his son the family sabre. A bonze came to offer the soldiers medals of good fortune; there was a gossiping old countrywoman, searching for her son without knowing where he lodged. The carpenter's wife hurried up with her new-born child

and was stopped by an officer, correct and cold in manner; but as she dropped on her knees, holding out the infant, he made a grimace to wink away a tear, took the child and let her pass.

The setting then changed to represent the interior of the house and the common-room of the soldiers. Seated or curled up on the floor, they were smoking and drinking, chatting or drawing, while the sergeant read aloud the daily papers. In a whining voice he declaimed the Tsar's declaration of war, interrupted by flashes of laughter and by quips, most of which flew back to the performers from the audience. On the introduction of the word "God," every one rocked with amusement. Then the soldiers rose and stood in line, with their heads bent, and to the solemn chant of the *Nô* the sergeant recited the declaration of war of the Japanese Emperor. After the tensivity of silence, all the spectators burst into the cry of "Banzai!" and then dissolved again into gaiety. A soldier who is a fishmonger exhibited the knife which is the weapon of his trade and with which he expected to cut Russian noses and ears. Leaping from one end of the stage to the other, he made use of his comrades to give a startling demonstration. The laughter had a sudden sound of ferocity: I wondered into what wasp's nest I had thrust myself. Then the tone of feeling happily changed. A soldier had composed a poem, and he sang it in a voice still full of the uncertainty of adolescence; another soldier seized a fan and executed a war dance; and the audience whispered that this was a real reservist and that the uniform which the actor wore was rightfully his.

The remainder of the spectacle represented the

naval battle. There were reproduced the episode of the soldier whose hand was torn off and who picked it up, and of the officer who, mortally wounded, refused to allow his boots to be removed, so that he might be ready to resume his post. The scene darkened and on a white curtain the cinema flung the picture of the half-sunk *Varyag*. A great wave flowed over the wreckage, and the patriotic intoxication reached its height. And, as an ending, one saw the dynamiting of a tunnel on the Vladivostok line, which was this morning's news: if this is not authenticated to-day, it will perhaps shortly be accomplished.

*5th March.* The Japanese Socialists deserve some analysis. With three or four neo-Christians, they form what is up to now the sole group frankly hostile to the war. The excellent notation concerning them in the bulletin of the École d'Extrême-Orient, edited for Japan by M. Cl.-E. Maitre, reports that the socialistic doctrine was imported, some years since, from San Francisco. It was at first a literary and philosophic movement, but the organization of workmen's syndicates gave it a practical base of action. During all of the immediately preceding year (1903) the Socialists have carried on active propaganda by means of meetings and of publications, and there has been ceaseless friction between them and the police. They have sought to establish international socialistic relations. In Japan they have the co-operation of several influential neo-Christians, notably Shimada Saburo, the deputy from Yokohama, and Takahashi Goro, the author of a text-book of Socialism. They have their Thomas Morus and their Bellamy, in the person of Yano Fumio, whose Utopian book, *The New*



*Society*, made a wide stir; they will possibly find their Blanqui in Oi Kentaro, a man of swift decisive action, who, with twenty companions, tried as early as 1885 to instigate revolution in Corea and was imprisoned by the Japanese government. The principal socialistic leader is Katayama Sen, the author of two books, *Municipal Socialism* and *Our Socialism*, and director of the Socialistic Review, *Shakwai Shugi*.

I chanced to buy the last issue of this publication. Its exposition of principles is intermixed, as one expects, with personal polemics. An article entitled "Reflections on the War" contends that Japan has not a single original idea to disseminate throughout the world; that neither its religion nor its morality, nor its material civilization, are of such a quality that they are worthy to be imposed by force, and that conquest for the sake of conquering is not an achievement. The present war is claimed to be without basic justification and without the inspiration of an aim: "The Japanese, we admit, are powerfully developed in the art of war. They destroy large vessels and even small ones. They are exceedingly brave. All Japan has yielded to the insidious charm of victory. If, however, we compare the Russians and the Japanese, we must compute not only their relative accomplishment in the military art, but also their accomplishment in scientific and general fields. One cannot claim that Japan is great, merely because of the courage of her army. Some higher quality than this must exist to assure a domination of the world. This quality might well be religion; but the Japanese religion is decayed and practically dead. It might also be an economic system; but, while

progressive industrial men should have no concern with Ministers or Kings, ours are subservient to the government. Nor can we claim that our morality is fit for imposition on other peoples. The spirit of fraternity, formerly so powerful amongst us, grows poorer day by day, and this is the single human sentiment which can conquer the world. We have seen many reservists part from their wives—an act intrinsically against nature; they feigned bravery in order to win applause. To summarize, our priests, our industrial leaders and our soldiers think only of pleasing the crowd, and Japan has not a single great principle to show the world.” One must admit that there is a touch of force, of generosity and of courage in these contentions.

Another Socialist Review, the *Heimin Shimbun*—a paper more for the crowd—declares, in good Japanese and with an English translation, what attitude the Socialist Party will take in regard to the war: “We Socialists have maintained a firm opposition to the general clamour in favour of the war and we have done our best to make known our attitude by speech and by publication. To-day, with the people losing their heads over the naval victories, this attitude remains unchanged. The enthusiasm grows from day to day and every one is now prepared to give the government all the money it needs. No one thinks of the disastrous consequences which will inevitably follow. Even the labouring classes refuse to see how deplorable the war is for them: they persist in their vision that some undefined amelioration of their lives will come out of the present ominous crisis. It seems as if they were stupefied by an intoxicant. A man who is suffering from cold can warm himself for an

instant with whisky; but his suffering returns as soon as the effect of the alcohol has passed. It is the duty of Socialists to remain dispassionate and to judge matters impartially. Was the Russo-Japanese war really inevitable? Is it actually true that the independence of Japan is menaced if the Russian forces are not expelled from Manchuria? Is it not always the case that war brings profit to a small number of capitalists, while it is sheer loss to the proletariat? As long as these queries remain unanswered, we cannot justify the conflict in which we are engaged."

*7th March.* A condemned man who was hanged the day before yesterday had hoarded two yen. The jailer urged him to spend them in a final feast, but the good fellow, in his patriotism, left the two yen to the government which decreed his death.

The situation presents many opportunities for citing the philosophy of history. Uchimura Kanzo has stated the following as the philosophy of Japan's political action: "In a word, it must be that of the Hungarians and not of the Turks. We are Mongols, a detached branch of the Altaic tribes; we have no need to deprecate this origin, for we know that no ethnic past can disbar either a man or a nation from the attainment of the highest ideals. It is civilization and not heredity which is determinant in the destiny of peoples." M. Uchimura is a Christian and a man of powerful mentality. He knows that he himself came originally from Central Asia; and he does not believe himself descended from Amaterasu and does not contend that the other nations are issue of the excrement of Susanowo.

"Japan, in her position as representative of the

Orient, should not seek to orientalize the world. The Turk tried it, and in spite of his initial successes he remains the sick man of the East. The Hungarian, also of Oriental origin and a cousin of the Turk, has done otherwise; and to-day his prosperity attests his wisdom. John Hunyade fought his Turkish brothers in defence of European civilization; and he thus saved Europe and Hungary itself. If the Hungarians were traitors to their race, they were faithful to the civilization which they had adopted. Their case is one of those in which it is necessary to desert one's parents in order to enter into the kingdom of progress.

"The Yellow Peril of which certain Europeans speak springs from their fear that Japan may play, on a larger scale, the same part essayed by Turkey. Millions of Chinese, armed by Japan, dance before their terrified vision, and they hasten to prepare to defend themselves against this danger. The futility of their effort is apparent, since if such an incursion were to come to pass no European nation could resist it. A Gengis-Khan, with his soldiers armed with Murata guns, would oversweep everything. But"—the tone of the statement changed in a way that relieved what had been, I admit, my fear—"this is exactly illustrative of the responsibilities of Japan and of her need of a noble self-control. As the vigilant guardian of the East, it is her task to forbid any encroachment by a barbaric power; but as the author of European civilization in the Orient she should never permit a revulsion, in her associate nations or in herself, against that civilization, which is the life of humanity. In the midst of the future glories that await her, she must never forget that her present glory is due to the civiliza-

tion which she received from the West ; that if her geographical situation is Oriental, her actual affinities are with the West, and that a nation is made of spirit and not of flesh."

Three weeks ago M. Uchimura was hostile to the war. He regarded the Russians as Mongol brothers. To-day he differentiates and distinguishes the living elements of the struggle, but his generous spirituality remains the same.

*25th March.* The extreme apprehension of the first month has almost disappeared. One newspaper gives the name of hysterics to the people who sacrifice their family treasures to the cause and who live in an ascetic frugality. The most ardent patriots have no longer so combative an air, nor do they seem keyed up to so keen an anxiety. Little by little the music of the guitars sounds less muffled.

It is remarkable that the single uncertainty apparent in Japan since the outbreak of the war has to do with the question of finance. The eventuality of defeat has never been mentioned and it seems never to have suggested itself to the majority of the Japanese. It is because of the universal certitude of victory that the country seems so perfectly united.

One of the two principal factions, the Seiya-Kai or constitutional party, announced that it could not reconcile itself with the Cabinet, whose interior and foreign policy and whose absolutist tendencies it condemned ; but that in the name of the unanimity of the nation it would not force any active opposition. The second party, the Shimpoto or the progressive group, declared its position on the same basis. The parliamentary sessions, which began

five days ago, have thus been exempt from discussion and occupied almost entirely by votes of approbation.

The perfection of this discipline has been achieved, it is true, by mutual concessions. The opening of the Chambers was preceded by a series of conferences between the members of the Cabinet and the party leaders, and there were sharp debates before a compromise was reached. The Cabinet was forced to forego several features of its programme. It was able to impose the monopoly on tobacco, but the monopoly on salt—a vexatious tax which produced little revenue—was rejected. The great tobacco dealers defended their case hotly; the press has carried on an enthusiastic campaign in their favour, and they have succeeded in augmenting the indemnity accorded to them. The agriculturalists have forced a reduction in the proposed increase of the land tax; the silk manufacturers have managed to evade a new tax on silk. At the cost of great effort the party leaders have obtained a ruling from the government that extraordinary taxes shall not be conserved for more than a year after the war; but it was only on the night of the 20th of March, after the solemn opening of Parliament by the Emperor, that definite accord was established on all these points.

With such prearrangements the official sessions, which are short meetings of an hour before a selected public, have reflected the “unanimity of the nation.” The Ministers read academic discourses and congratulations were sent to the fleet. The various articles of the budget were arbitrarily voted; and, to crown the patriotic enthusiasm, a deputy accused one of his colleagues of having sold himself to

Russia. No serious accusation could be furnished against the pretended spy, but such is the mental sensibility of public assemblies in war time that he was immediately proscribed, with imprecations.

*29th March.* Lieutenant Hirose, who tried to block the entrance to Port Arthur, was to come here to give, concerning his exploit, a lecture which now will never take place. He renewed his attempt and was killed. The papers publish his biography and cite him as a national hero. It appears that he was a lover of art and spoke English, French and Russian. In this cultured man it is surprising to find a certain mystical veneration of monarchy. At an official ceremony the Empress once shook hands with him, in the Occidental fashion; and he preserved the gloves he had worn and wished to die, as he said, wearing them.

*31st March.* Japanese officials and American residents here have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the landing from American ships on the Japanese coast, an event which determined the advent of Western civilization. Imposing speeches have been made on the subject. One of the deputies, M. Shimada, declared in the heat of his ardour that Japan had definitely adopted the Anglo-Saxon type of civilization, characterized by the love of liberty, equality and progress. Count Okuma, who is more attached to the old Japan, analysed in a subtle speech the proportionate influences of the interaction of American ideas. He defended the policy of a closed door, established by Seyasu at a time when Europe ceased her religious wars only long enough to dismember herself in the Thirty Years' War. "This policy assured to Japan a peace of more than two centuries, in the security

of which there developed a renaissance of the literary art, a progressive commercial growth, and a marvelous increase of public prosperity." He recalled the fact that long before the arrival of Commodore Perry, medicine, botany, astronomy and other branches of Western science had been introduced by the Dutch of Nagasaki. From the beginning to the end of his speech he combated the idea that a mystical stroke by a magic wand had been given to Japan by the West.

Since this legend has become common property in its misapprehension and will be repeated to the point of satiety during the present war, it is well to recollect how much exaggeration it contains. In 1854 Japan was inferior, in general culture, to no European country; it was superior to most of them. At this time Europe had the advantage only in a certain number of practical inventions, made in the previous thirty years, and in the fact that some nations had established constitutional government. Japan had her first railway in 1874; France had had hers thirty-seven years earlier. The difference is scarcely a formidable one; and if the new method of transportation seemed strange to Japan, it was no less so to the France of Louis-Philippe. The Japanese government was made constitutional in 1889; this can hardly be called an excessive delay in progress, as compared with that of other nations; and the country was not less prepared for this form of administration than the France of Louis XV or the Austria of Metternich. In a word, Japan, with her civilization equal to, and of older origin than, European civilization, consistently ignored Europe as long as she considered that Europe had nothing important to



teach her. She adopted European innovations almost as soon as they appeared. This does not seem extraordinary. The new Japan and the old are not in a more marked opposition than the new and old phases of any given European country.

*Osaka, 2nd April.* The castle of Osaka is remarkable for its mass. It is noteworthy that while most things in Japan are small and on a small scale, when they are large they reach the proportions of the gigantic. An entire quarter of the town is contained in the first enclosure. The massive walls, with their deep projecting angles, recall the fever of enthusiasm for such construction which beset the Japanese when they had learned from the Portuguese the art of building fortresses. Stone buildings were then a complete innovation to them. Yet this colossal citadel was raised in two years—one wonders how.

The scale of the castle evokes the people who lived in it and the master mind which ordered its construction. In the sixteenth century the nation was energetic, adventurous, brutal, rich in blood and muscle, worthy of the praise of Stendhal or of Taine. From Osaka there set out the great expedition to invade Corea, the single one made by the Japanese before 1894 outside of their own territory. Three hundred thousand men were launched in the adventure, as many, it may be, as will be involved in this Russo-Japanese war. There was no real motive for the invasion. Neither Corea nor China threatened Hideyoshi. The war was a direct consequence of the acquisition of new armaments, and was necessitated by the frenzied prodigality of the times. Each New Year's Day the daimyo were required to transport to Osaka

mounds of gold, and Hideyoshi, on his part, maintained the fidelity of his followers only by a ceaseless distribution of fiefs and of goods. "Their desire for gain was limitless," says a Japanese historian, "but the power to satisfy it was circumscribed by the size of the country. Thus, Hideyoshi was forced to award to his generals recompenses to be conquered in foreign lands." The Japanese conquistadores flung themselves upon the peninsula at the time when the pillaging soldiers of Spain were sacking all of their known world. But they were confronted by what to-day the Russians supremely lack—by an admiral of genius. The Corean admiral invented to combat them those famous tortoise-like boats, covered with iron plates and able to advance from either end, which were the first armoured ships. He succeeded in cutting the communications of the would-be conquerors; and the expedition to Corea terminated like Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt.

To-day the enormous fortress is again sending forth soldiers for the conquest of the continent. The very stir of the horses in their stalls sounds as if they were restless to be off and across Siberia. The same nervous energy runs throughout the men, and one feels that its inspiration comes from that old land of carnage, Europe.

*3rd April.* The festival of the apotheosis of the first Emperor, the founder of Japan. To-night a Russian boat was burnt in effigy. From the window of my inn I could see the rapid passage of lanterns, as fleeting as the sound of guitars, on the black water. They are the geisha boats, and each lantern cast on the water a bar of tremulous gold. When the fire of the supposed Russian ship burst forth,

all the river flamed into light and on the other bank a great shout rose from a vast invisible crowd.

*7th-8th April.* One can go from Osaka to Hiroshima by water through the Japanese archipelago; the boat drops down the river, between the hedges of high caravels, and then stops, one by one, at every little port. The inner sea of Japan is like our Mediterranean set in a garden. Even at night one traces the wonders and surprises of the coast and its beauty penetrates one's sleep. At dawn new islands emerge in the light, some leafy and some arid. The morning mist suspends the mountains in the sky, as they appear in the *kakemono*. Little by little each village, each beach, and each watering-place grows precise in detail and the extravagant lines of the twisted pines dissociate themselves from the grey rocks. At every loveliest point there is a temple. Here and there rises from the sea a flowery cluster of trees, clinging to a frail islet of sand; and we floated past the dreaming fishing-boats where entire families spend their lives, crouched about a tiny fire.

At one place the sea narrows to the dimensions of a wide river and one can see the tomb of that Kiyomori who, in the twelfth century, was tyrant of the archipelago. The incessant warfare between the pirates of these islands once created here a great naval-power, which was the rival of the feudal power established in the north in the plain of Kamakura. Sailors fought against archers and Taira against Minamoto. The victory was won by the North; but to-day the people of the South have their advantage again and fill almost all the high grades of the navy and the army.

*9th April.* Everything has united, in the last

two months, to deepen the profound impression of that upheaval which attends the commencement of a conflict. War seizes a people as a passion seizes a man : both experiences are of a basic force before which everything else is effaced. Sacrifice, suffering and death exact no cost and life has no intrinsic price apart from the momentous emotion. The circumstances are always regarded as unique and unparalleled ; yet the individual is only one more man touched by the eternal genius of life, and the nation is, with equal completeness, in the hands of the god of destruction, the irresistible Siva.

Those actively engaged in a war can never explain its causes. At the root of these is an instinct not of hate but of pride. The sonorous old word glory is still the same motive of combats ; and, when a people fling themselves into carnage, it is above all because of their idea of this idealism. In this war almost all the Japanese believe themselves bent on the ruin of Russia ; only a few of them know that what they hope to conquer is her esteem.

# CONFUCIUS



# CONFUCIUS

## I



WE had left the train which, in recent years, has run from Tsinan-fou to Nankin, through the most ancient China; the holy mountain of T'ai-chan, at the base of which we had crept, was gone from the horizon. In the vast plain the shimmering harvest was ripening in the July sun; its golden riches, swollen by the last rain, seemed, in their dry brilliancy, to be already thirsting for the next.

We took our places in the Chinese cart, one of us bent to suffocation beneath the dark canopy, the other half protected by the awning stretched above the horse. The wheels slipped into ruts older than time, and with its accustomed lurch the cart swung into the long slow movement of the horse and the driver who walked beside him.

We found ourselves in the immeasurably ancient district of Lou, two hours' journey from the jurisdiction of K'iu-feou, the city where Confucius was for more than thirty years a functionary, which he quitted, dissatisfied with the trend of public action, to travel for fourteen years in neighbouring countries, to which he returned to die and where he has his tomb. In honour of this tomb there exists the

temple which China, in an increasing ardour of faith, has enlarged from age to age. One is perpetually dumb before the enigma of this man whose doctrine has united a vaster multitude of faithful than that of any god and who has to-day more temples than Buddha or than Allah. What genius is enclosed in this commandment founded solely upon reason, and that modest form of reason which is the operation of good sense? It is an incredible departure from the usual premises to have to recognize that this kind of practical wisdom can work as great prodigies as faith; that a people can ceaselessly, from generation to generation, honour reason rather than a divinity. The admission is a difficult one for the Occidental soul still saturated with mysticism.

Our cart made its slow way between the hedges of slim reeds which waved above it their plumed crests, bursting with grain. This is a kind of millet, which provides the Chinese peasant with the mats for his house and with a broth for himself and his live-stock. When the high interlaced walls opened, long fields of flax and wheat stretched beyond; farther still a vast multitude of swollen gourds crept across the ground. The cart wheels dropped into sand, and suddenly a river cut the plain in two. Our driver stripped himself to his waist and we passed over a shallow spot, with the water murmuring about the axles.

One has the sense that these customs have altered but little since the beginning of the world. Our cart is like that of the most primitive scripture, with its body balanced on long axles which protrude fantastically beyond the wheels. Confucius made his journeys in such a vehicle. The width between the



wheels, and the consequent width of the ruts in the road, is to-day, as it was in his time, peculiar to each region; so particularly and so invariably that a definition of this measurement is also a definition of the province from which a man hails.

Our driver showed us in the distance a long wall, with innumerable trees beyond it. This is the tomb, or rather, as they term it, the "forest" of Confucius. Half an hour later we had entered the city.

There is nothing to recall to one either a Mecca or a Jerusalem; no shops with religious objects, no wares for tourists, and no hostel for the reception of pilgrims. It was with difficulty that we found a bookseller who had a description of the temple, and this he refused to sell because he did not want our silver piastres and we had not enough sous. We engaged our lodging in the inn, which is neither better nor larger than those in the usual villages. They gave us two rooms, whose floors were of trodden earth; on the wall was a portrait of the Sage and some of his inscriptions. Our fellow-lodgers were some carters, a few merchants and two actresses from Tsinan-fou, who had been driven out as the result of brawls.

Close by some triumphant arches, a vast enclosure and monumental gates announce the presence of a great temple. This is the sacred edifice of Yen-tseu, the favourite disciple; the temple of Confucius is farther off; in itself it occupies half of the city and a street runs through its precincts. As one approaches it, one passes under a belfry, on the summit of which an enormous drum, framed in a lovely kiosk, strikes the hour, twice each day. The "forest" is still distant, beyond the walls.

The city is filled with a curious peace. In spite of the filthy mud of its streets, the sordidness of its hovels and its clamorous troops of naked children, it has an air of serenity and quietude. From the high ramparts one's eye rests on the long placid flow of harvests. In every public square there is a small stone mill, and the people pass in turn, to grind their millet and their wheat. Tiny cages holding grasshoppers hang before the shops; and each time the carts pass the insects supplement the shrill creak of the wheels with a still shriller cry. The palace of the governor is guarded by soldiers with long braids, whose air is scarcely martial; its dignity is further signalized by its lovely beams of blue and gold. The men seem relaxed and without muscle, and have a touch of effeminacy. The women sway on their tortured feet, which give them the air of wounded hinds; but the faces of many of them have a fine purity and an expression of deep sweetness.

Like all Chinese cities, this malodorous one exhales the very perfume of literature. Not a house and not a door is without a literary inscription. Ordinarily this takes the form of the expression of a good wish, to which is given a metaphorical or poetic turn. Sometimes it is a delicate phrase or a classic allusion for the relish of a subtle intelligence. The very shop signs are composed to flatter the perspicacity of the literarily minded.

A knot of people, as we approached, proved to be listening to a blind man. He held a kind of long tube, covered with a serpent skin and sealed with another tightly drawn skin, for resonance; and while he struck this, at regular intervals, he recited an old epic plaint. It was touching to see the

respect with which he was surrounded and the frequent request for a repetition of the loveliest passages. Elsewhere some people were seated or standing about a public scribe who, with his spectacles on his nose, was reading a romance for which he furnished the mimicry, the variations of intonation and a running commentary. As his chapters ended, those who were pleased with his performance gave him one or two coins.

This rustic city is again like other Chinese cities in that it is haunted by genii. Everywhere a sense of their presence is evident; and, what is more, everything indicates that most of them are importunate. In front of or behind the apertures of each house a screen is placed to prevent them from entering. The terrifying images of the Taoist gods whom the genii most fear are pasted against the doors; and on the roof-trees are placed porcelain statuettes of those animals whose influence is exorcising—dogs and lions, fish and unicorns, represented in the most hostile postures. As one finds everywhere in China, the summit of each roof is carefully slanted upwards. There have been various reasons offered for this slant, which is so typical and so strange; it has been suggested that it is a surviving form of the construction of the tents of nomadic ancestors; but investigation has established the fact that the most ancient Chinese houses have roofs which drop uniformly. The roof which is bent upwards appears at the same time as the cult of Taoist exorcisms. It is, therefore, probable that this architectural movement was an attempt to facilitate the flight of genii from the house and to prevent them from striking against the roof itself and falling.

If Confucius returned to-day, he would find the morality of his city little changed. His fellow-citizens still profess two of his most rooted doctrines—a taste for literature and a careful avoidance of supernatural beings.

## 2

The temple of Confucius is an entire city, or rather a vast palace, with large and small apartments, high ceremonial chambers, light kiosks, parks, courts, galleries, common-rooms and dependencies. The spirit of Confucius has a princely lodging, surrounded by his four associates, the twelve great philosophers who followed him and his seventy-two principal disciples. In addition to his spiritual family, his terrestrial relatives are given a place near him. One palace is reserved for his wife, one for his father, another for his mother, and a fourth for his ancestors. Wide parks open out through triumphal arches and beyond magnificent monoliths which have been erected by his worshippers. Space has not been spared; there is everywhere evidenced the sense that this immense monument, which represents the unity and the moral continuity of China, should be expressive of the grandeur of that unity and the majesty of that continuity.

In the temple-palace itself nothing is mystical; nor is anything religious, in the usual sense of the word. The atmosphere differs totally from that of a church, a mosque or even of a Buddhist temple. Everywhere there is testimony to the deference, respect and veneration which surround the wisdom of the men who are honoured here; but at no

moment does the freedom of the human spirit seem bent by the oppressive consciousness of concealed power. There is no reserved area, no darkened sanctuary, no Holy of holies. Everything is open, gracious and light. The guardians are neither priests nor sacristans. If you observe the laws of natural decorum you may go anywhere and do whatever pleases you, without the risk of violating a rule or profaning a sacred precinct. You are visiting a prince of the mind, who is not a Buddha and still less a god.

Taken as a whole, it is one of the great monuments of the world. The height of the vision it conveys and its architectural beauty come from its plan and its proportion. Spaces and masses, parks and buildings, supplement each other and subordinate themselves harmoniously to the principal edifice, which dominates them without dwarfing them. Logic, rhythm and balance are everywhere; reason is satisfied before the eye is satisfied. Each court has its particularities of dimension; each pavilion has an original form; but the pervasive order and symmetry hold them in the relation to which they are proportionately suited. The great gates through which one successively passes are placed at calculated distances, the terrace on which is raised the main pavilion is neither too high nor too low, and a harmony flows throughout all the detail. Once there is established in one's mind the sense of this sureness and strength and of grave balance, one is prepared to savour the comparative relation between a stela and the pavilion which covers it, between the pavilion and the court which surrounds it, between one of the columns and the roof which it supports; and from the outer park to the innermost,

one sees a thousand repetitions of the thuya, a tree with the sombreness and rigidity of the cypress, which in its architectural lines and its V-shaped branches adds to the classic regularity of the whole.

This regularity would border on severity if the men who designed it had not foreseen the admirable collaboration of nature. The essentially Chinese negligence of the guardians of the temple has added to the art of its architects. Almost without exception the parks have been overrun not only by weeds but by a thick jungle ; a jungle alive with perfumes and noises, dense with every kind of bush and plant, where partridges scuttle to and fro and grasshoppers cry. Only the great paved court which precedes the central terrace is free from other invasion than that of mosses and lichens. The alignment of the thuyas has been just enough broken ; and the effect is marvellous. Against the clear deep green of the jungle, the two beautiful colours used by the architects—the imperial yellow of the lacquered roofs and the vermilion of the walls—spring into vigorous contrast ; and in the surrounding frame of these vital colours, which are everywhere present, all the other colours glow with life and harmony. The grey of the thuyas takes on the delicacies of a softened silver ; the polychromy of the under roofs—a blue symphony touched with green and gold—becomes a festival of beauty. The smallest object which passes in the distance, the blue of a cotton drapery, the pallor of flesh or the rose of a silk robe, surprises and enchants the eye.

Once one has felt the organized grandeur of this Chinese monument, one feels that it rivals the greatest magnificences of Asia. The unforgettable temples of Japan have a romantic beauty. They are

subordinated to Nature, and they show her in aspects perpetually new, always moving and always rare. But they do not unfold themselves into space. They rather concentrate one's view on a single spot where the human heart can lift itself in peace. Their appeal is to feeling, to all feeling, and it is couched in a magic and persuasive tongue. But none of them speak the solemn universal language which one hears here. Indian monuments have the quality of splendour. Their beauty consists in an infinite multiplicity, on foundations which are summary and often poor, of everything which can startle and stimulate the imagination. Only the Musulman architecture of India can be compared to this grandeur of plan and this balance of proportion. Yet an intrinsic element must always separate these two. Musulman architecture is equally sublime for its perfection of taste and for its indigence of thought. Nothing must distract the spirit of the worshipper from the pure and simple affirmation of the existence of Allah; here, on the contrary, everything is prepared by minds which are both selective and wise.

Each part of the temple of Confucius has a literary signification, and its name is inscribed in gold on ultramarine, upon a tablet placed so as to summon the attention. Every one of these names, as well as the order of their precedence, has been carefully chosen. The spirit is led, by a gradation of allusions and of memories, to the summit of the highest thoughts; and the temple has thus not only the perfection of arrangement, but is also a visual rule of life, in which the preface precedes the development of subject and is followed by the peroration.

## 3

As one returns to the temple, day after day, it acquires a charming familiarity, from the great drum beneath the belfry to the soldiers on guard, in their straw hats, who no longer turn their heads to watch us pass.

Every day we pay our duty to the Perfect One, whose heavy lips have a delicate smile, behind his jade pendants, and who seems to greet us with an infinite wisdom and an infinite beneficence. Then we wander into the oldest portions of the palace, where he lived. The eternal thuyas have allowed a few other better-known trees to penetrate here, of the same kind, so legend says, as those which grew in his day. The well which belonged to his family still holds water from the same source as that which supplied it before it reflected his face. An Emperor who came to drink from it composed a poem which is engraved on a stela, under a tiny roof, set in the wild grasses.

There is a little wall, built on the site of a similar wall in which were found inurned some priceless books, containing the most ancient text of the master's teaching. But what seems to make the Sage most present is the sight, just behind the temple enclosure, of the curved roof of the palace of Duke K'ong, his lineal descendant and the present head of the Confucian house. He is a city magistrate, as all his ancestors have been since that greatest ancestor who dispensed justice here. The line of his nobility, which is older by centuries than almost all other descendance, is established on the unbroken testimony of Chinese history. China has



never suffered a usurpation of this claim. In the thick foliage a stela covered with moss traces this genealogical tree of twenty centuries up to the fourteenth century; beyond this, everything in China is practically contemporary. The fact of this unbroken line of functionaries lays an extraordinary touch on one's imagination. To see side by side the dwellings of the Ancient One and of his successor, and to shift one's eye from the well of the one to the palace of the other, is to witness in material terms the miracle of Chinese perpetuity.

There is an open chamber, a sort of finished outbuilding, erected on the site of a similar structure where Confucius had with his son two interviews whose history has been preserved. One of the disciples was in constant fear that the master was not imparting to him all his knowledge. He therefore asked the son of Confucius if his father had given him any special wisdom, and received the following answer: "One day when my father was alone, and while I was passing quickly and silently through the room"—this was a mark of respect—"he said to me, 'Have you read the *Book of Odes*? If you have not read it, you will not be an accomplished man.' I read it. On another such occasion he arrested me as I passed by saying, 'Have you read the *Book of Rites*? If not, your virtue will lack a firm foundation.' I went apart by myself and I read it. This is the wisdom I have received from my father." The disciple was overjoyed and said: "I asked for one answer and I received three. One concerns poetry, one concerns rites, and the third is that the Sage gives no secret instruction to his son." If Cicero could have known this citation of poetry and rites

as supremely important, one feels how he would have felt its charm.

The originality of Confucius lay in the fact that he gave no new rule, but that he instituted a school for the practice of the highest virtue. Its method was of a mutual moral development. The master corrected his pupils with vigour but with an equable humour; at times he was corrected himself. His weakness was that he was at once too courteous and too sensitive; and his followers blamed him equally for his exaggerated politeness in calling upon a lady of the oldest of the professions and for his exaggerated grief at the death of his favourite disciple.

He submitted all his acts to the freest criticism. His thesis was to form man not by doctrine but by his contact with man. This practice of a practical virtue so enchanted him that he lost, as he has said, all need of food, that he forgot all care, and that he did not feel the advent of age. He and his followers held contests in the cause of goodness, in which the effort of each one was to imagine the most perfect actions; he expressed his opinion freely, concerning people and things, events and ideas, the heroes of the past and the politicians of the day, and it was difficult to know which trait in his wisdom to admire most—the firmness of his character, the suppleness of his wit or the generosity of his heart. As he says of himself: “No knowledge is born in me, but I love the past and I have learned to learn. Am I wise? I know not. But whatever it may be to cultivate virtue without ever experiencing distaste and to teach without ever knowing lassitude, that I do.”

It was in this world of composite beauty, with

its colours, its verdure and its silences, that so many just and profound maxims came from him :

“The wise man does not grieve because men know him not, but because he knows not men.

“The wise man does not spurn a good word because it is spoken by the wicked.

“Have I a science? I have no science; but when the humblest man questions me, no matter what his ignorance, I answer him fully.

“Not to correct an involuntary fault is to commit a real one.

“It is more difficult to guard oneself from bitterness in poverty than from arrogance in riches.

“One can carry off a general from the midst of his army; one cannot deprive a man of his resolve to practise virtue.

“That which one knows, to know that one knows it, that which one knows not, to know that one knows it not, is the true knowledge.”

Confucius practised this last maxim, the negation of which has cost humanity so many illusions and deceptions. Concerning matters of which nothing is known he made no pronouncements. He avoided any talk of spirits and of phenomena; he spoke, indeed, very little of celestial providence. When a disciple interrogated him concerning death, his answer was : “You who know not what is life, how can you know what is death?” This abstention has a rare and touching quality. On the approach of his end, when the wisdom of most sages weakens, and when his disciples asked if they should pray to spirits for him, he refused, despite his love for his rites and ceremonies, and replied briefly : “My life is my prayer.” Socrates, in his enigmatic sacrifice of a cock to *Æsculapius*, was less firm.

His explanation of his rule excels in its simplicity. "There are matters which a wise spirit does not study; but those which he studies, he never quits until he knows them. There are matters on which he does not meditate; but if he meditates, he does not cease until he has made his discovery. There are matters concerning which he asks no question; but if he questions, he never rests until he has understood. There are matters which he does not attempt to differentiate; but those which he differentiates he never leaves without having seen all their differences."

His art was to subordinate each thing to its end. What one perpetually admires in him is his balance, his fineness and his justice. He detested antithesis and emphasis, as he distrusted sublimities. The conduct of life and the conduct of public affairs were the domain of his operation. If he loved power it was because he preferred action to speculation. Like a Cicero or a Leibnitz he was most a philosopher when he had to console himself for not being a minister. His programme was simply to apply his mind to public affairs and to deal with them ceaselessly. He did not consider that to despise preferment was an absolute testimony of virtue. "When the State is well governed," he said, "the wise man will be ashamed to possess neither honours nor riches." One of his disciples cited to him with admiration a minister who, when he was three times raised to power, showed no joy, and when he was three times stripped of it showed no regret. The master praised him, but with reserve, since he considered that indifference towards the responsibilities of office is not perfection.

## 4

A charming portion of the temple is the pavilion of metal and of silk, which is also the pavilion of music. No corner of this vast solitude is more deserted. The tangle of thorns and roots is thick around it, and it is replete with a thousand scents and with the cries of a thousand insects. Passing through the surrounding wilderness of weeds, of odours and of sounds, one comes upon the long half-ruined pavilion, whose proportions carry the universal beauty. Here is preserved—if one can apply the word—the collection of musical instruments.

The objects in this collection are broken and incomplete, and this gives to it the added charm of surprising lapses and unevennesses. The lutes have lost their silken cords; the flutes are gone; it must be that they are preserved elsewhere. In the octaves of sonorous stones or of bells, one or two notes are missing. But some ancient instruments of great loveliness remain: a flattened bell which emits a sound of extreme purity, a resounding stone cut in the form of a square, the timbre of which is exquisite, and drums of all sorts. These instruments are used for the celebrations in honour of Confucius. He himself was passionately fond of music. He played melodies on the lute and on the musical stones, and whenever he fell in with good choristers he delighted to sing with them. In the country of Ts'i, it is said, he heard songs of such beauty that for three months he lost his sense of taste. On his return to his own province his first care was to restore the cult of music. The masters

of the art had been scattered; he gathered them together and raised to honour again the loveliest of the old odes; and his tender respect for the chief musician who was blind clings always to one's memory.

His favourite songs were those of a soft beauty, such as the songs of the Emperor Chouen. The warrior songs of the Emperor Ou seemed to him too strident. He detested the music of Tcheng as at once too sensual and too brilliant. He compared it to the deep purple which he disliked and which he regretted to see substituted for the rich red of his forefathers. There was no separation in his mind between music and rites; the latter expressed the complete and sensible form of duty; the former expressed the symbol of duty and represented its soul. By this he always meant that this spiritual quality was chiefly carried in music executed in concert. The attitude of the musician in a concert resumed, according to his idea, the attitude of the citizen in his obligation to society. In this consummation he affirmed that participation in music perfected character, and to one of his followers who mourned the fact that his virtue was not yet perfect he replied that his lute was not yet perfectly tuned. His followers have used this tendency of his taste to define his relation to the immense number of his faithful. They compare the resonances of his doctrine to a harmony which perpetuates itself from century to century. Seen in this light, he is neither a saviour nor a prophet, a legislator nor a hero, but the master of a universal choir.

## 5

After we left the music pavilion we were invited to visit the School of Rites ; this is the college of those benevolent officials who, on fête days, direct the ceremonial. We passed through the wild gardens, the museums of epigraphy, beneath the solemnly beautiful doors and the triumphal arches, and at the other end of the immense temple we came upon a small silent court. A great thuya has dropped towards earth there, to grow horizontally, and no one has disturbed it. On three sides there open out three very simple chambers, with their doors thrown wide. We were offered a stool and a bowl of tea, and we found ourselves surrounded by some thirty youths and men.

They are a hundred in all, under the direction of four monitors, and they meet here to rehearse the ceremonials. Their service in the temple is entirely voluntary and gratuitous ; they receive no recompense of any sort and pay for their own food. One cannot call them priests ; their mission is not divine and they are not part of a sacred hierarchy. When an old monitor, who was trying to explain their functions to us, alluded to himself as a professor, they interrupted him gaily to ask if he was trying to pass them off as scholars. They completely lack the ecclesiastical tinge, that indescribable mixture of insinuation and reserve which the service of any doctrine so frequently brings. But their office is far more than figurative. They are the human means for the conservation of a tradition which is extremely ancient and extremely minute ;

and one has the sense that if they freely apply themselves, with so exact a devotion, to the study of these ceremonies, the ceremonies themselves must be beautiful.

As we followed the rehearsal which they were good enough to give us of the principal of these rituals, the one which takes place each year in the name of the State, one realized this beauty and the high qualities of both its age and its simplicity. An important dignitary is the chief functionary, with sixty-two assistants. He makes his entry to music; and in the religious silence which succeeds this he approaches the statue before which the offerings are made. At this moment the bells commence their melody. The choirs and the stringed instruments follow them, and the resonant stones terminate and hold the sound until the second strophe. There is thus executed, in cadence, a very slow hymn. It consists of six strophes which correspond to six periods of the ceremony. Each strophe is made up of eight verses and each verse of four majestic monosyllables, carried by four full notes. The hymn is not only sung; it is traced, as it were, on the ground by two groups of dancers who hold long pens and short flutes and who follow, by their movements, the caligraphic character of each syllable as it is sung, and thus embellish the spiritual idea.

One does not feel that this ceremony corresponds to an effusion of soul. It rather expresses, by its simultaneous appeal to the eye and the ear, the rite which is being fulfilled and the sentiment which it should awaken. The first offering is that of wine and of fruits, the hymn for which flows somewhat as follows :



My spirit rests in the clarity of virtue.  
Jade breaks the long echoes of metal.  
Among the living none could approach him.  
His word has swept over the stars.  
Here are the vases aged a thousand years.  
Each year, on the sacred days,  
The limpid wine flows into them,  
Its perfume rises to the sky.

This ritual and this cult evoke in the French mind a strange memory of those ceremonies of the Revolution which were prescribed by David, and of which Marie-Joseph Chénier was the poet and Michelet the musician. Seen from the temple of Confucius, there is a thread of logic in them. What they lacked was a past of a thousand years. The cult of which Auguste Comte dreamed has been dreamed in China, and when we honour Michelet or Rousseau at the Pantheon, we are to some extent participating in one of those feasts of reason which are so essentially Confucian. In the West the more laic rites are still in demand, and the worship of reason and of humanity is still unformed. It exists, however, and—since any assemblage of men turns to ritual and ceremonial—one can imagine that, if religions weaken, it will grow and that in a few centuries the celebrations at the Pantheon might have their definite form, each part of which would testify to a sensibility and a tradition and to collective emotions.

Since the dawn of history China has trained herself to honour reason. We may teach her the application of it, as we teach her a hundred thousand inventions and a thousand forms of science. What we can learn from her is a lesson of respect. She can prove to us that this cult is neither difficult

nor of precarious tenure, and that no faith which deals entirely with the supernatural has yet equalled it in its extension or in its longevity.

## 6

The temple of Yen-tseu is also a palace, with special dwellings for the disciple and for the various members of his family, with verdant parks and walls of vermilion, with lacquered roofs and blue doors, and a whole aligned army of thuyas. But the surroundings of the follower have a more intimate air than the surroundings of the Sage.

It was Yen whom Confucius most loved and of whom he said: "Yen hears me in silence throughout the day, as if he had no mind to object or to question. But when he has gone from me I see all my teaching sanctified in his conduct"; and it was Yen who wrote: "The more I study the doctrine of the master, the higher I find it. I see it before me, and suddenly it is behind me. If I wish to cease my progress in it, I am unable to; and after I have spent all my strength, there is always something new in front of me, like an inaccessible mountain."

When Yen died, in his thirty-second year, the grief of Confucius was so extreme that he said that heaven had taken his life and annihilated him. The disciple had come of a very poor family, and, faithful to his love of the fitting, Confucius wished for him a simple funeral such as he had had for his own son. The other followers disobeyed and he was interred with great splendour. Their love for him became part of their faith, and when the Sage spoke of him it was with that depth of feeling,

at once passionate and extravagant, which only the heart inspires.

To look at the gentle young face of the young disciple brings one nearer to his master and lends an intimacy to the respect he evokes. Two qualities are eminent in Confucius—his intellectual method and his social conception; but there is a third, the freshness of his sensibility. It is recorded that when he found himself eating beside a man who was dejected at the loss of a near relative, the infection of grief so overcame him that he himself could scarcely eat; and when he went to weep for one of his own dead, his sorrow prevented him from singing throughout the entire day.

This spontaneity and this sincerity of feeling explain what he has said concerning ritual. In his view, it was not an insignificant gesture or a lifeless form. He penetrated the sense of ceremonial and infused it with a soul. Mourning was to him the sensible form of bereavement. He exemplified in himself the profound grief of old races—a profundity which too often escapes us in our day. His rites were the beautiful vessels in which he enclosed, for preservation and transmission, that most subtle and precious of essences—sentiment. Those ancient usages which he wished to retain were not such as claimed the adherence of a temporary fashion, but those which preserved and codified a deep feeling, like saluting at the foot of a stairway, rising before the blind and before persons in sorrow, and changing nothing in the house of one's dead parents for the immediate years after their death. In a case where there was a choice in the matter of behaviour, a sureness of instinct always indicated to him the more noble and the more exquisite.

Confucius would never hear of the fact that virtue was in itself enough without politeness. He viewed them as inseparable; he saw courtesies as coming from the heart, and that when they were practised with all the heart a moral elevation ensued.

His own instinct was distinctly sociable. There was always a light raillery in his opinion of those fierce sages who, to escape the spectacle of human injustice, fled to the mountains and the deserts and sought the society of animals. For his part, he regarded his fellows with no such rigour and he could imagine no disillusion which would tempt him to renounce the charm of human intercourse. Once when his courage was at a low ebb he exclaimed: "If I fled to a raft in the midst of the sea, who would follow me? Yen, I suppose." And when he saw Yen's joy at this comment he added charmingly: "Yen is more courageous than I, but he needs a little cleverness."

He had in the largest sense that greatest quality, humanity. Long before the Stoics he taught charity to one's kind, and far in advance of the Christians he humanized all its elements. It was he who first said: "Do as you would be done by; do unto others as you would that they should do unto you; love thy neighbour as thyself." And the immortality of these words assures him, in the world at large, the rank which China has given him.

## 7

We spent our last morning in a visit to the tomb of Confucius.

In former days it stood at the gates of the city;

but K'iu-feou has expanded disproportionately in another direction, and now the lengthy walk of old trees which leads one to it passes out of the gates and through monotonous fields. The sudden apparition, across the path, of a triumphal arch interrupts one's reverie. The trees grow more and more closely until they are contracted between two walls of vermilion; a little farther and one passes through a door into the "forest."

It is a strange spot, overrun by the wildest nature, so tangled and so isolated that it would seem part of the primeval world if the regularity of the cypresses did not give warning that it was the approach to a tomb. A stream flows amongst the bushes; there is no monument visible, but only an altar for the ritual offerings. The wide walk is bordered with sculptured stones which date from the second century of our era. First there are two octagonal columns, then two pairs of fantastic animals, and finally the statues of two functionaries, one of the military class, carrying his long sabre, the other of the civilian, with his ivory tablets ready to note the orders of the prince. Beyond the altar the walk continues; it passes on the left the tomb of the grandson of Confucius, Tseu-sen, the second of the Associates and the author of one of the four Confucian books. There is another stone to the right, commemorating the son of Confucius. The path turns, and a little farther, in front of a green mound, in the completest solitude, stands a final stela.

The three tiny vessels of bronze placed before it are the sole marks of its sanctity; but one has the sense that the grandeur of space and silence is alone equal to the grandeur of this dead. The

forest about exhales its rumours and its odours, and the cypresses stand with the languor of grief. Scattered amongst the undergrowth are little seats which commemorate the fact that Emperors have come here to meditate.

One's impression, as one confronts the spot, has all the quality of a vision. The universality of this teaching raises the wonder, in one's mind, whether the future may not see a universal temple; whether, in a few centuries—and in this scale of measurement what do centuries count?—the three great continents may not unite to raise an edifice twice as vast as the one we have just left, and in which the Greek perfection shall be combined with the Chinese amplitude—a building as final in its beauty as the Parthenon and as majestic in its spaces as the plan of Peking.

Confucius would there be venerated side by side with that other sage who, on the other side of the world and at a date almost as early as his own, taught the subtle use of reason; he and Socrates, the ceremonious Chinese and the ironic Greek, would be regarded as the founders of this moral science, as those first to recognize the warmth of charity and the clear flame of reason, and to fulfil their part as spiritual fathers of the State.

With these two would be honoured their associates in thought. Confucius would have his four companions, his twelve philosophers and his seventy-two disciples; Socrates would have beside him memorials to Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle and Epicurus. It would be difficult to extend to the West the list of those whose accomplishment was to be commemorated, since there reason has been too long neglected; but Descartes would be placed

beside Seneca, Spinoza would follow them, and there would be noted Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe and Auguste Comte.

To the Orient and to the Occident, the uniting of these names would certify the universality of reason; and, whether this monument existed in actuality or in the cult of a common veneration, it would mean a recognition of our common thought, of its perpetual struggle towards clarity and of the peace of its ultimate achievement.

Confucius has said that the way to honour the dead was to keep them present in one's mind. His own presence is so perpetuated that it conquers those who come here as curious travellers and lays upon them the vivid touch of his philosophy. The quiet of good judgment has never before appeared so exquisite and so intimate. Before this tomb the future of the more mystic religions seems less assured. What they teach is also taught here, and taught both more efficaciously and simply. It is in this age-long silence that one learns something of the necessity to free one's mind from the chimerical, to maintain in the face of the unknown a dispassionate and fearless attitude, and to live in the society of one's fellow-men with an incorruptible measure and harmony.







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